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CHURCH MANUAL:

OR THE

HISTORY, STANDING RULES, DISCIPLINE,

ARTICLES OF FAITH, AND COVENANT,

OF THE

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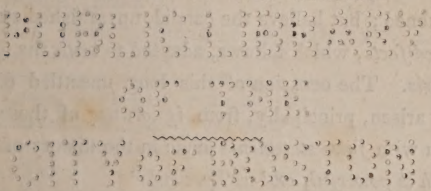
348.21

First (Trinitarian Congregational) Church of Christ

IN SCITUATE, MASS.

WITH A LIST OF THE MEMBERS.



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PREFACE.

THE origin and design of this little Manual are briefly told. The Pastor, believing the practice generally adopted by our churches, of placing a *printed copy* of the Articles of Faith, Covenant, Rules, Pastors, &c., in the hands of each member of the church, highly beneficial, wished to adopt the same. In giving a list of *the pastors*, some account of *the separation* in 1825 seemed necessary and important, especially from its bearing on the question as to *the true* "First Church of Christ in Scituate;" a question which has already too long been allowed to disturb the minds of many in this community. This part of the work has been much enlarged and improved from the original design, principally from the suggestions of those unfriendly to its publication. We disclaim any intention to awaken controversy, or to continue it, if awakened; but believe the candid, unvarnished statement of *well-attested facts*, which follows, adapted to *settle* the question on its *true basis*. The occasion of this long, unsettled dispute has doubtless arisen, principally, from *ignorance* of these facts, in connection with *false statements* made in the history of the town. But "*truth is powerful, and will prevail.*"

SCITUATE, JULY 15, 1844.

HISTORY.

SCITUATE, Mass., began to be settled before 1628, by "men of Kent" County, England. The town was incorporated Oct. 6, 1636.

The First Trinitarian Congregational Church of Christ in Scituate,* was gathered Jan. 18, 1634, O. S.† Mr. Giles Saxon labored here in the ministry, previous to its organization, between 1631 and 1634. "Their sentiments, in general, were those of Mr. Robinson, of Leyden."

The first meeting-house was erected some years before the church was gathered, and stood by the "old burying-ground."

Rev. John Lothrop was installed the *first pastor* of this church, Jan. 18, 1634. He removed to Barnstable in 1639, and died Nov. 8, 1653.

When Mr. Lothrop removed to Barnstable, he took *a*

* This church was originally and has since usually been called simply, "The First Church of Christ in Scituate;" but as so many churches of *other denominations* have arisen in our vicinity and country, since its organization, it now seems *necessary* to be more full and specific in regard to the *name*. This we can do, with the greatest propriety and truth, without attaching any *new idea*. That this church has been of the *Congregational order*, from the commencement, none will deny; that it has also been *Trinitarian*, is equally evident. And as the terms "Congregational" and "Trinitarian" have always been *implied*, though not formally expressed, we assume *nothing new*, in the more full and specific expression of *the name*.

† *Old Style* is *ten* days behind New Style, between 1582 and 1700; *eleven* days, between 1700 and 1752, when the New Style was introduced. Previous to 1752, the year *commenced* on March 25th, instead of Jan. 1st. Hence *double dating*. The above date, accordingly, would be, N. S., Jan. 28th, 1635.

majority of the church with him, taking 22 male members, and leaving only 7 or 8. But "before their departure, *the church* assembled on purpose that they might *provide* to leave the remaining part *in a church state.* The pastor propounded to those that stood up, whether they resolve to become *a church* or not. Certain of the brethren answer that they desire so to do. The pastor then desires them to show themselves, who they be that desire it, who declare themselves, and they were about *eight men.* Then he propounds to the church, whether they judge these brethren meet to be left *as a church* by themselves, and *the church* answers in the affirmative. Then the pastor replies to the brethren that desire to be *a church*, that *they must covenant* to walk together in the ways of God, according to his revealed will; to this they answered that they would so do. So that *the church* was *well satisfied*, and agreed to declare in public, on the Lord's day, that these were separated, and become *a church.* And this was soon after published on the Lord's day, by the pastor, who required those brethren to walk together in all the ways of God, and *they all consented.* After this, both *the church that departed*, and *all other churches* that knew us, *held communion* with us, as they had occasion, and to us as *a church* was Mr. Chauncy dismissed by the church at Plymouth, and by this church was he ordained a pastor." And in view of *these facts*, the church at Plymouth afterwards also formally acknowledged, "that the brethren that were left at Scituate by *the church* that went to Barnstable, *were left in a church state.*"* (See Deane's History of Scituate, p. 73, seq.) Perhaps our church would more properly *date* their organization at *this period.* Under *these peculiar circumstances*, however, of *mutual separation and arrange-*

* It will here be noticed, that it was not those who *removed* to Barnstable that were *re-organized*, but those who *remained.* It was *the church* which removed, being *the majority.*

ment, it is not difficult to trace, with propriety, the *continued existence of our church state*, from 1634.

Rev. Charles Chauncy was installed pastor, 1641. He removed to Cambridge in 1654, where he was inaugurated second president of *Harvard College*, Nov. 27, 1654. Died Feb. 19, 1671–2, O. S., aged 82.

In 1654, *Mr. Timothy Hatherly*, who first came from England in 1623, and settled in Scituate as early as 1634, presented to "*the church*"* a parsonage and certain lands. In 1661 he also gave his house and land on Farm Neck, "for the use of the ministry." About this time, Rev. Mr. Chauncy gave his share in the undivided Conihassett lands to "the church and society." Other small donations and grants were early made. The property was sold at different times, and in 1831 the proceeds amounted to $5381,95. This now remains *in the hands of the First Society*.

We may add, with regard to Mr. Hatherly, that he was evidently not only a man of ability and great moral worth, but of *Calvinistic faith* and *ardent piety*. History informs us, that "no man deserved so well of the plantation," of which "he was generally considered the *guardian* and *patron*." Says Morton, "He was one of the first beginners, and a good instrument to uphold *the church* and town of Scituate." He died, 1666. There can be no doubt, as to the character of the preaching, which Hatherly, Chauncy, and indeed nearly all the *early fathers* of this *pilgrim church*, for the first one hundred and forty or fifty years, wished to support and perpetuate. But this is only *one* case of *many* in which *Calvinistic funds* have been *unjustly* appropriated to support an *opposite faith*.

Rev. Henry Dunster was inaugurated *first president of Harvard College*, Aug. 27, 1640; resigned Oct. 24, 1654,

* There can be *no doubt*, that by "*the church*" is here meant *the First Trinitarian* Church of Christ in Scituate.

and repaired immediately to Scituate, where he labored in the ministry till near his death, Feb. 27, 1659.

Rev. Nicholas Baker was ordained 1660, and died Aug. 22, 1678.

The second meeting-house was erected in 1682, on the same spot where the first stood.

Rev. Jeremiah Cushing (graduate H. U. 1676*) was ordained May 27, 1691, and died March 22, 1705, aged 51 years.

Rev. Nathaniel Pitcher (graduate H. U. 1703) was ordained Sept. 28, 1707, and died Sept. 27, 1723, aged 38.

The third meeting-house was erected in 1708 or 1709, in the same place as the two former houses, the cost not to exceed £300.

Rev. Shearjashub Bourn (graduate H. U. 1720) was ordained Dec. 3, 1724; dismissed Aug. 6, 1761, and died at Roxbury, Aug. 14, 1768, aged 68 years.

The fourth meeting-house was erected in 1737, in part from the materials of the old house, on "the gore of land."

Rev. Ebenezer Grosvenor (graduate Y. C. 1759) was ordained April, 1763; resigned April, 1780, and died at Harvard, May 28, 1788, aged 49 years.

The fifth meeting-house (now standing) was erected in 1774, "on the top of the hill." Dimensions, 66 feet by 48. Repaired in 1825 and 1839. The *first bell*, furnished in 1811, weighed 1300 lbs.; the *second*, in 1814, weighed 1408; the *third*, in 1822, weighs 972 lbs. Stoves were first introduced in 1824.

Rev. Ebenezer Dawes (graduate H. U. 1785) was ordained Nov., 1787, and died Sept. 29, 1791, aged 35 years.

Rev. Nehemiah Thomas (graduate H. U. 1789) was ordained Nov. 14, 1792; dismissed April 29, 1825, and died Aug. 10, 1831, aged 66.

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* The earlier pastors were educated in England.

The *first Sabbath school* in Scituate was connected with this church, and was organized in the spring of 1819. It originated among a *few sisters* in the church, only one of whom is still living.

THE SEPARATION.

A majority of the brethren in the First Church of Christ in Scituate, "feeling greatly dissatisfied with the present loose state of things in this church, particularly with respect to 'a covenant' and 'confession of faith,'" commenced regular measures, Nov. 20, 1824, for the correction of existing evils.

At a church meeting, notified by Rev. Mr. Thomas, and held Nov. 25, 1824, the subject of "the covenant on which this church had stood for more than a century," was introduced. Not closing the business, the meeting was adjourned to Dec. 25th, when a committee of three was chosen, by the pastor's suggestion, to assist him in the examination of the subject, and to report "as soon as is convenient."

Feb. 6, 1825, the church met by request of the pastor, and "*Voted, to renew and adopt the old covenant, found on the church book, as the covenant of this church.*"

At a subsequent meeting, held by adjournment, March 4th, the church "*Voted*, that the Rev. Mr. Thomas be requested to transcribe the covenant found on the old church book, on the present church book, and that all members that are disposed, be requested to sign it."

Also "*Voted*, that all persons in future that are admitted into this church, be received by a vote of the church, at a meeting for that purpose."

The above votes were made known to the pastor, by a special committee; but as he refused to comply with these requests, a still further request was made known to him in *writing*, and *signed* by a *majority* of the *male* members of

the church, viz., *that he would notify a church meeting*, to be held April 9th, for the purpose of "settling difficulties," or to "take into consideration the expediency of sending to some of the sister churches for advice and assistance."

The Rev. Mr. Thomas refusing to take any notice of this request, also, the meeting was notified by the senior deacon, Israel Litchfield.

April 9th, 1825, the church met, and passed several votes of aggrievance, and chose a committee to inform the pastor of the same, and also to *invite* him to join with the brethren in calling a *mutual council* for advice. At a subsequent meeting, the Committee reported, that the Rev. Mr. Thomas "*absolutely refuses to have any thing to do with the subject.*"

The church then "*Voted*, to send to seven churches for advice and assistance, under our present trying circumstances." (See Discipline, page 21, § 17.)

The following churches were accordingly agreed upon by vote, viz.:

Rev. Mr. Wisner's church, Boston; Rev. Mr. Green's church, Boston; Rev. Mr. Fay's church, Charlestown; Rev. Mr. Edwards's church, Andover; Rev. Mr. Storrs's church, Braintree; Rev. Mr. Perkins's church, Braintree; Rev. Mr. Colburn's church, Abington.

As the Committee appointed to send letters missive were informed that some of the churches sent to would not be able to attend, they took the liberty to send also to the Rev. Mr. Greenough's church, Newton, and Rev. Mr. Thomas's church, Abington.

The doings of the Committee, in this respect, were approved by vote of the church, April 19th.

April 27th, 1825, the Council assembled, agreeable to notice, at the house of Mr. Rowland Litchfield, and was composed of the following pastors and delegates, viz.:

Old South Church, Boston, Rev. B. B. Wisner, pastor, Bro. Thomas Vose, delegate.

Union Church, Essex St., Boston, Rev. Samuel Green, pastor, Dea. Josiah Vinton, delegate.

Church in Braintree, Rev. Richard S. Storrs, pastor, Bro. Levi Thayer, delegate.

Union Church, Weymouth and Braintree, Rev. Jonas Perkins, pastor, Bro. Jonathan Newcomb, delegate.

Second Church in Abington, Rev. Daniel Thomas, pastor, Dea. Isaac Reed, delegate.

Third Church in Abington, Bro. Samuel Reed, delegate.

The Council was organized by the choice of Rev. Daniel Thomas, as Moderator, Rev. Jonas Perkins, Scribe, and Rev. B. B. Wisner, Assistant Scribe.

Among the first business of the Council, was the choice of Dea. Vinton, of Boston, and Dea. Reed, of Abington, as a "Committee to inform Rev. Mr. Thomas that an Ecclesiastical Council, convened by letters missive, purporting to be from the First Church of Christ in Scituate, to inquire relative to certain difficulties said to exist between said church and their Rev. pastor, is now in session at the house of Mr. Rowland Litchfield, of Scituate, and would be gratified with Mr. Thomas's attendance, or with the reception of any communication he may have to make to the Council."

"The Committee, having attended to the duty assigned them, reported that Rev. Mr. Thomas was *absent*." "*Voted* to accept the report."

Surely, every method to effect a *fair* and *impartial settlement* of the existing difficulties was attempted, which truth and justice could demand.

The following extracts are taken from the result of said Council:

1. "That, in the measures taken by the First Church in Scituate, in relation to the revisal and use of the *ancient*

covenant of said church, they have exercised the rights pertaining to them as a church." (See Disc., p. 19, §2.)

2. "In the judgment of this Council, the said First Church in Scituate has just cause to feel aggrieved."

3. "That the said First Church in Scituate have taken all necessary measures to remove difficulties and to restore harmony among them."

4. "Provided a majority of the male members of the said First Church in Scituate shall, at a regular meeting, *vote* that they are dissatisfied with the present administration of the word and ordinances to said church, it will be, in the judgment of this Council, expedient that they should, as the First Church of Christ in Scituate, take such measures as are warranted by the word of God, and the Platform of the churches in this Commonwealth, to obtain for themselves such an administration of the word and ordinances as is agreeable to the dictates of their own consciences; and that, if such majority shall, at a regular meeting, *vote* that it is expedient and proper that the *relation* subsisting between said church and their present pastor, *be dissolved, they will be justified in so doing*."

"The grounds of these statements are the fact, that the said pastor of the said First Church in Scituate *has refused, and persevered in refusing*, to comply with the *regular votes* and *directions* of the said First Church; and the declaration of the Platform of Discipline, that 'in case an elder (i. e. pastor) offend incorrigibly, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to *call* him to office, so they have power (to order the council of other churches, when it may be had, directing them) to remove him from his office.'" (Chap. 10, §6, 7.) (See Disc., p. 19, §2, 4.)

The entire result of Council was "read, article by article," and then they "*Voted, unanimously*, that it be accepted, as the result of the proceedings of this Council."

(Signed,) DANIEL THOMAS, *Moderator.*
JONAS PERKINS, *Scribe.*

April 27, 1825, the church met at the house of Rowland Litchfield, at 2 o'clock, P. M., according to previous adjournment; Bro. Eleazer Peakes, Moderator, Bro. Charles Curtis, Scribe.

The church then "*Voted*, to accept the result of the Council."

Also "*Voted*, that a Committee of four persons be chosen to notify the brethren of this church of the time and place to which this meeting shall be adjourned."

"*Voted*, that Dea. Israel Litchfield, Bro. Ward Litchfield, Bro. Calvin Jenkins, and Bro. Charles Curtis, be a Committee for the above purpose."

"*Voted*, to adjourn to April 29th inst., at 6 o'clock, P. M., at the dwelling-house of Jacob Vinal."

"April 29th, 1825. Met according to adjournment. Chose Bro. Eleazar Peakes, Moderator, and Bro. Charles Curtis, Scribe."

"*Voted*, that we are dissatisfied with the present administration of the word and ordinances to this church by their pastor."

"*Voted*, that it is expedient and proper that the *relation* subsisting between this church and their present pastor *be dissolved*, and that *the same is hereby dissolved*, a *majority* of the male members of this church concurring in this vote."

The following is a true list of the names of this majority, viz.:

*Dea. Israel Litchfield,	*Levi Vinal,
Calvin Jenkins,	Jacob Vinal,
*Ward Litchfield,	*Charles Curtis,
Eleazar Peakes,	Augustus Cole,
*Rowland Litchfield,	*James Turner,
*James Jenkins,	*Stephen Mott.

Total, *twelve*.

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* Deceased.

The following is a true list of the names in the *minority*.

*Dea. Seth Merritt,	*Samuel Jenkins,
Paul Merritt,	Simeon Vinal,
*Reuben Bates,	*John Studley,
*Robert Ellmes,	*Chandler Clapp,
Howard White,	Cyrus Dunbar.

Total, *ten*, exclusive of the *pastor*, then *under trial*. Several more of this minority withdrew, soon after.

These movements were not made suddenly, rashly, or in secret; but with deliberation, with prayer, and in regular church meetings. These were in progress during the period of more than *five months*, in which time were held from ten to fifteen regular church meetings, duly notified and afterward approved by the Council. If it be said, it was an *exparte* Council, let it be remembered that a *mutual* Council was *refused*. These meetings were all held in the meeting-house, till disturbed and driven away by the beating of drums, and other annoyances.

It has been objected, that the *majority* included one member whose moral character was not good, being of intemperate habits. To this it may be replied, he was then a member of the church in regular standing, no course of discipline having been commenced in respect to him, though he might have needed it; yet perhaps not more so, than some who remained in the minority. This same member afterwards reformed, and has since died in the Christian hope. But, without this member, there was a *clear majority* in favor of the above action, as the pastor could have no vote when *his own case* was on trial.

In May, 1823, *eleven* persons united with the First Church in Scituate, *five* of whom afterwards took an active part in the secession. It has been said that these persons united with the church for the very purpose of effecting

* Deceased.

this division. Nothing can be farther from the truth, as living witnesses fully testify. Most of them had for years previously indulged the Christian hope, and were anxious to own their Saviour before men; but not being satisfied with the character of the preaching then enjoyed by the First Church in Scituate, for a time neglected to unite with it, or with any other, and often attended evangelical preaching in the neighboring towns. But feeling it was a *duty* to unite with some church of Christ, and that it was a great sacrifice to go regularly from ten to fifteen miles to these neighboring places of evangelical worship, and knowing that the First Church in Scituate,—*the dear church of their Puritan fathers*,—was originally evangelical, and still had a *church covenant*, *fully trinitarian and evangelical*, on their church records (though for a time laid aside, on the responsibility of their pastor alone, with whose views it did not coincide), and knowing that a *part* of the church were still evangelical, and mourning over the sad departure of many from the true faith of the gospel, these brethren, after counsel and advice from experienced ministers and other Christians, concluded to unite with the First Church in Scituate. Their object was, not to effect a separation,—this was farthest from their thoughts,—but to effect a *reform in the church;* to "strengthen the things that remained, and were ready to die;" to re-establish the old covenant and early faith of the fathers, and thus secure to themselves and posterity the *true faith and ordinances of the gospel.* But the preceding sketch shows how these efforts were controlled, and to what necessities they were ultimately driven. Whether they are to be approved in the course pursued, may be better known by considering whether it was a *worthy object* to strive for the re-establishment of the faith of our *pilgrim fathers*,—a faith they believed conformed to the Bible, and a faith for which no inconsiderable *funds* had been early left by those fathers,

with the express design of sustaining. Let the candid judge.

After the proceedings before described, as the Rev. Mr. Thomas persisted in occupying his usual place in preaching to the majority of the *congregation*, without the least regard to the *votes of the church*, the latter were obliged to withdraw from their house of worship, and to procure another place. The house where Mr. Lot Vinal now lives was fitted up for a temporary place of worship, and occupied till their new church was dedicated.

In the spring of 1825, a new society was formed, and during the following year, the sixth meeting-house of the First Church was erected. Dimensions, 40 feet by 54. The corner-stone was laid July 22, 1826, in a time of special revival, with appropriate religious services.*

These brethren who thus came off from the old society, and those who have since united with them, continue to call themselves, as a self-evident truth, the First Church of Christ in Scituate; or, more fully expressed, the First Trinitarian Congregational Church of Christ in Scituate. The two principal grounds for this claim, are, 1st, the clear *majority* in the preceding votes and action of the church; and 2d, the sameness of faith and church covenant with the original Puritan church, from its organization in 1634, down to the present time. Our present church covenant was adopted 1710–11. Our articles of faith are still essentially the same. An appeal from the moral and ecclesiastical law to the civil (which recognizes no distinction between a church and a society), as a claim to this title, must be regarded as wholly futile, by all who regard the laws of God as superior to the laws of man.†

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* See original hymn, page 17.

† The "judicial decisions," such as in the Dedham case, it is generally believed, will be, at no very distant day, reversed, as they already have been in England, and virtually, by every other State in the Union, except Massachusetts. Their injustice is too apparent to be always endured.

In withdrawing from the old society, the church were obliged to forsake not only their house of worship, and all the funds given to "the church," and "for the use of the ministry," but even their own sacred church plate and church records, a copy of which also has recently been denied them, and even the privilege of consulting those records in the hands of their clerk for a few dates, but on what principle of "Christian liberality," or even common honesty, it is not easy to see.* What harm can a knowledge of facts do to the innocent?

"As a different view of this separation has been given to the public, hereby shown to be erroneous, we, the undersigned, who were personally interested and active in that event, have felt it our duty to posterity, as well as to the church, and the sacred cause of truth, to bear our united testimony to the preceding statements, that, so far as we can recollect (and they are taken almost wholly from authentic records, made at the time), they are faithful and correct.

(Signed,) CALVIN JENKINS, JACOB VINAL,
ELEAZAR PEAKES, AUGUSTUS COLE."

The above four are the only male members of the majority now living, one of whom is eighty-six, and another eighty-eight years of age. The great age to which those attained, who came off as the majority, and have since died, is worthy of notice. (See Catalogue.) Fifteen of the twenty-eight have already died, and of these the ages of thirteen have been ascertained, and together amount to exactly one thousand years; average seventy-seven. The average age of four other survivors is now about 82 years.

Rev. Paul Jewett (gr. Br. U. 1802) was installed pastor of the said first church, Nov. 16, 1826. Their new house of worship was dedicated the same day. Mr. Jewett was dismissed July 18, 1833; died at Hamilton, May 15, 1840, aged sixty years.

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* See Appendix.

Rev. Luke A. Spofford (gr. Mid. C. 1815) was installed pastor May 20, 1835. Dismissed, April 13, 1836.

Rev. Phinehas Smith (gr. Yale C. 1816) was installed pastor Sept. 2, 1840. Dismissed, Sept. 8, 1841.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr. (gr. H. U. 1837) was ordained pastor, Sept. 28, 1842.

The society, with which this church is now connected, numbers about sixty families. The congregation varies usually from 100 to 200 or 250. The Sabbath school enrolled on its catalogue, the last year, 180 persons, of whom ninety-seven were over eighteen years of age, though the number present at one time rarely equals one hundred. Several among the number are past the age of seventy, and one old gentleman, eighty-four years of age, has been quite regular during the year, and the last Sabbath he was able to attend public worship, opened the school with prayer. He died peacefully a few weeks after. His wife was the first who put in motion efforts for a Sabbath school in Scituate.

ORIGINAL HYMN.

BY REV. PAUL JEWETT.

Sung at the laying of the corner-stone of the sixth meeting-house of the First Church in Scituate, July 22, 1826.

1 While with our hands this stone we place,
An emblem of the Saviour's grace;
May Christ, the Rock, our faith sustain,
Our hope support, our love maintain.

2 Look down propitious from above,
Thou Fountain of eternal love;
And with thy arms of power surround,
This chosen, consecrated ground.

3 Here may a holy temple rise,
A type of heaven above the skies;
And here the pilgrims oft repair,
For humble worship, fervent prayer.

4 Here may the trump of truth be blown;
Here may the seeds of grace be sown;
And here a long succession rise
Of saints for mansions in the skies.

5 May thy good Spirit, Lord, direct
Our counsels, and thy church protect;
Save us from sin, from error keep,
From wolves preserve thy chosen sheep.

6 O God, Jehovah, Father, Son,
And Holy Ghost, thou three in one,
To Thee alone be worship given,
By all on earth and all in heaven.

STANDING RULES.

1. The Lord's Supper shall be administered once in two months, viz., on the first Sabbath in January, March, May, July, September and November.

2. The Preparatory Lecture shall be held on the Friday afternoon preceding such Sabbaths.

3. Regular church meetings for prayer, conference, and business, shall be held on the last Friday in January, March, May, July, September and November.

4. Candidates for admission to this church, whether formerly professors or not, shall be examined in church meeting, and propounded at least two weeks previous to admission.

5. The invitation at each communion shall be in substance, as follows: Members present from other Evangelical churches in regular standing, are invited to commune with us on this occasion at the table of our common Lord.

6. A contribution shall be taken up at the close of each communion to defray the special expenses of the church, the excess to be distributed by the deacons, at their discretion, among the poor members of the church, and a committee of three shall be chosen annually, in November, to settle with the deacons and report at a subsequent meeting.

7. It is desired, that members of this church, expecting to be absent more than one year, will receive letters of dismission and recommendation to the church where they reside; also, that members from sister churches, expecting to commune with us more than one year, will connect themselves with us as members; *Provided*, however, in either case, there may not be special reasons to the contrary; and letters of recommendation shall be regarded as valid only one year from date, whether presented to or from this church.

8. It is recommended, that the monthly concert of prayer for missions be observed on the first Sabbath evening in each month, and that a collection be taken up to promote the cause.

9. It is recommended, that the monthly concert of prayer for Sabbath schools be observed on the second Sabbath in each month.

10. The Sabbath school, with Bible classes for adults, shall be continued through the year, to be re-organized on

the last Sabbath in April, and if thought expedient, near the last Sabbath in October.

11. The church recommend a Maternal Association and female prayer meetings.

12. The church recommend a third service on Sabbath evening, and a regular conference and prayer meeting or lecture on every Wednesday evening, in some part of the parish.

13. We assume the name "Congregational," as indicating the form of our church government, agreeable to the rules laid down in the "Cambridge Platform," a brief synopsis of which is given below in our articles of

DISCIPLINE.

[*Prepared by a distinguished minister of New England, and adopted in various churches.*]

1. A church consists of a number of visible saints, who unite and bind themselves by a public profession of the Christian religion, and by a mutual covenant, to maintain religious communion in the worship and service of God, and the ordinances of the gospel. [See ref. Art. 12, Con. of Faith.]

2. Such a company of saints possess all the power which the Lord Jesus Christ has given to his church on earth; and are authorized and warranted by him, independently of any other body, whether civil or religious, to maintain and exercise in his name, the government and discipline, which he has established and enjoined by his supreme authority, in the holy Scriptures, for the preservation of the peace, order, purity and happiness of his churches.

3. A church may exist, and has a right to act respecting its own interests and concerns, previously to the election and appointment of its standing officers.

4. It is the duty and the privilege of a church to choose and appoint its own officers, who are bound, when they are regularly inducted into their offices, to act as the servants of the church, for the promotion of its spiritual interests, in the duties of their appointment.

"And if the church have power to choose their officers and ministers, then in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, they have power also to depose them; for to open and shut, to choose and refuse, to constitute in office, and to remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power."—*Cambridge Platform*, chap. 8, sec. 7.

"The choice of church officers belongeth not to the civil magistrate, as such, or diocesan bishops or patrons; for of these, or any such like, the Scripture is wholly silent, as having any power therein."—*Ibid.*, sec. 9.

5. The ordinary and necessary officers of a church are ministers and deacons; but a church has a right to appoint any of its members, to the performance of any service, that may be accounted necessary or expedient, for the advancement of its spiritual interests. Phil. 1: 1.

6. It is the office and duty of a minister to preside in the church, to preach the gospel, to administer the Christian sacraments, and to labor publicly and privately for the spiritual and eternal welfare of the souls that are committed to his charge.

7. It is the office and duty of deacons to perform any stated or occasional service, which is assigned by the church; and particularly to serve the church at the administration of the Lord's Supper, and in the communication of their charity, to relieve and supply the temporal necessities of its needy members.

8. A church is bound by its covenant, and by the requirements and exhortations of the Scriptures, to be attentive to the conduct and state of all its members; to maintain and manifest the spirit of Christian affection and sympathy, and to watch and labor for the prevention of unchristian and disorderly conversation and behaviour.

9. If any member of a church do any injury, or give any offence to another member, it is his duty to go, without delay, to the one whom he has injured or offended, and to make a Christian acknowledgment and confession of his fault, and render satisfaction to his injured or offended brother. Matt. 5: 23, 24.

10. Whenever any member of a church is guilty of a scandalous offence, it is the duty of any other member who has the knowledge of the offence, to go directly to the offender, and to proceed with him according to the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel according to Matthew, 18: 15—17 (see the whole chapter).

11. None ought to bring a complaint against a member of a church before the body, unless they are satisfied that there is just cause of complaint, and evidence of the offence, nor until they have taken the private methods to convince and reclaim him.

12. A church ought not to receive a complaint against a member, unless it be brought by two or three, who testify that the private methods to reclaim him have been taken,

without success; and that he ought to be called to an account by the church. Matt. 18: 16.

13. A church ought, by a public sentence, to excommunicate every offending member, who persists in his offence, or who does not afford evidence of repentance and reformation, after dealing with him according to the Scriptures. 1 Cor. 5: 11, 13. Titus 3: 10, 11. 2 Thess. 3: 6.

14. An excommunicated person may not be restored but upon public confession of his sin, a profession of repentance, and a reformation of his conduct.

15. It is believed to be agreeable to Scripture and reason, and suited to promote the order and communion of a church, to appoint a number of brethren to act as a committee, for the purpose of attention and inquiry respecting all the concerns of a church, and the conduct of its members, and to digest and state to the church such things as respects its condition, interests and duties.

16. As psalmody is a very important part of divine worship, and an ordinance of divine appointment, it is the duty of a church to take proper and faithful measures for the decent and devout performance of this sacred service.

17. It is expedient for a church to obtain the judgment and advice of other churches, in important and difficult cases, by their presence and assistance, in a counsel of pastors and delegates. Acts 15: 1—31.

18. Adult believers and believers in earlier life, who have not been baptized in their infancy, and the children of professing believers, before they arrive to adult years, are the proper subjects of baptism.

[See Art. 12, with ref. Conf. of Faith.]

19. None but the cordial friends of Christ, ought to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and every church ought to require a credible profession of holy and supreme love to the Lord Jesus Christ, in every person whom they admit to their communion.

[See reference 6, Art. 12, Conf. of Faith.]

20. It is the duty of every church, and of every member of every church, to make constant progress in knowledge, holiness, usefulness and happiness, that they may adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, in all things. Amen.

FORM OF ADMISSION.

ADDRESS.

Beloved Friends,

You have presented yourselves before God, his people and the world, to make a solemn confession of your religious faith, and to take upon you everlasting obligations. We trust you have duly considered the nature of the professions you are about to make, and the engagements into which you are about to enter. Your vows will be heard on high, and will be exhibited on your trial at the last day. Yet be not overwhelmed. If you are sincerely desirous to be the Lord's, to believe his word and obey all his commandments, he will give you wisdom and strength to perform your engagements, and will conduct you in safety to his heavenly kingdom.

Having examined and assented to the Articles of Faith, adopted by this church, you will now profess the same before these witnesses.

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

ART. 1. We (you) believe in one only living and true God,[1] the Creator,[2] Preserver,[3] and Governor of the universe,[4] who is a spirit,[5] self-existent[6] and eternal,[7] unchangeable in his being,[8] and infinite in power,[9] knowledge,[10] wisdom,[11] holiness,[12] justice,[13] goodness,[14] and truth.[15]

[1] Ex. 20 : 3. Mark 12 : 29. John 17: 3.—[2] Heb. 3 : 4. Job 9 : 8. Gen. 1: 1. [3] Job 7: 20. Neh. 9 : 6.—[4] Ps. 103 : 19. Isa. 33 : 22.—[5] John 4 : 24. Ps. 139 : 7, 8.—[6] Ex. 3 : 14. Rev. 1: 8.—[7] Isa. 57: 15. Rom. 1: 20. Ps. 90 : 2.—[8] Mal. 3 : 6. Jas. 1: 17.—[9] Mat. 19 : 26. Job 11: 7. Gen. 17: 1. Rev. 19 : 6.—[10] Ps. 147 : 5. Acts 15 : 18. 1 John 3 : 20.—[11] Rom. 11: 33. 16 : 27.—[12] Isa. 6 : 3. Ps. 99 : 9. 111: 9.—[13] Deut. 32 : 4. Ps. 119 : 142.—[14] Mat. 19 : 17. Ps. 100 : 5. Ex. 34 : 6.—[15] Ps. 146 : 6. Rev. 15 : 3.

[N. B. These references should be committed to memory, and studied.]

ART. 2. We believe that the Scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testament, were given by inspiration of God;[1] that they reveal a harmonious system of divine truth,[2] and are a perfect rule of faith and practice.[3]

[1] 2 Tim. 3 : 16. 2 Pet. 1: 21. 1 Cor. 2 : 13.—[2] John 17 : 17. 10 : 35. See these Articles of Faith.—[3] Isa. 8 : 20. Ps. 119 : 105. 19 : 7–11.

ART. 3. We believe that God is revealed in the Scriptures, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,[1] and that these three are one in essence,[2] equally possessing the same divine attributes and perfections.[3]

[1] Mat. 28 : 19. 2 Cor. 13 : 14. Eph. 2 : 18. Heb. 9 : 14. 1 Pet. 1: 2. Mat. 3 : 16, 17.—[2] 1 John 5 : 7. John 10 : 30. 5 : 23. Gen. 1: 26. Acts 5 : 3, 4. 1 Tim. 3 : 16.—[3] John 1: 1, 14. Rom. 9 : 5. Col. 1: 16, 17. Heb. 1: 2. Mat. 18 : 20. Rev. 2 : 23. 5 : 12. 1 Cor. 12 : 3–10. John 14 : 26. 15 : 26. Mat. 12 : 31. 1 Tim. 1: 2. Gal. 1: 3. 5 : 22. 1 Cor. 2: 10. Luke 12 : 11.

ART. 4. We believe that the purposes of God, like his existence and perfections, are immutable and eternal;[1] that his perfect plan of government is exercised in infinite wisdom and benevolence;[2] that his providence extends to all his creatures, and to all their actions;[3] yet in such a manner that the moral freedom of man is neither destroyed thereby, nor impaired.[4]

[1] Isa. 46 : 9, 10. 14 : 24-27. Ps. 33 : 11. Eph. 3 : 11. Acts 2 : 23. Eccl. 3 : 14.—[2] Eccl. 3 : 14. Ps. 104 : 24. 33 : 5.—[3] Mat. 10 : 29-31. Gen. 45 : 5-8. Acts 2 : 23. Job 38 : 41. Pr. 21 : 1. 147 : 2-19.—[4] Phil. 2 : 12, 13. Heb. 13 : 20, 21. Rev. 22 : 17. John 5 : 40. 2 Cor. 8 : 12. Rom. 2 : 15.

ART. 5. We believe that the first parents of the human race were created holy and upright,[1] but that they fell from their original state, by voluntary transgression;[2] and that, in consequence of their fall,[3] mankind are by nature entirely depraved,[4] being destitute of holiness,[5] under the dominion of sin,[6] exposed to the wrath of God,[7] and deserving of endless punishment.[8]

[1] Gen. 1 : 27. Eccl. 7 : 29. Eph. 4 : 24. Col. 3 : 10.—[2] Gen. 2 : 16, 17. 3 : 6, 24. Ezek. 18 : 4. Rom. 6 : 23.—[3] Rom. 5 : 12, 15, 19. 1 Cor. 15 : 22.—[4] Eph. 2 : 3. Job 14 : 4. John 3 : 6. Rom. 7 : 18.—[5] Heb. 12 : 14. 1 Cor. 2 : 14. Jer. 17 : 9. Rom. 8 : 7, 8.—[6] Eph. 2 : 1-3. Rom. 5 : 6. John 6 : 44. Jer. 13 : 23. Rom. 6 : 16. 7 : 14. 8 : 7, 8.—[7] John 3 : 18, 36. Mark 16 : 16. Gal. 3 : 10.—[8] Ps. 28 : 4. Ezek. 7 : 27. Rom. 6 : 23. Mat. 25 : 46.

ART. 6. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,[1] coequal and coeternal with the Father;[2] that he took upon him a true body and rational soul,[3] and by his sufferings and death made a complete atonement for the sins of the world,[4] so that God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth;[5] and that upon condition of repentance for sin,[6] and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,[7] pardon and eternal life are sincerely offered to all.[8]

[1] Rom. 1 : 4. Mark 1 : 1.—[2] John 1 : 1. 10 : 30. Col. 2 : 9. Heb. 1 : 8. 13 : 8. Phil. 2 : 6. John 14 : 9. Eph. 1 : 20-23.—[3] Gal. 4 : 4. John 1 : 14. Rom. 9 : 5. Heb. 10 : 5. Mat. 26 : 38. Luke 2 : 52.—[4] Heb. 9 : 14. 1 Pet. 3 : 18. 2 : 24. Acts 20 : 28. Rev. 5 : 9. 7 : 14. Isa. 53 : 5, 10, 11. Heb. 10 : 14. 9 : 22. John 1 : 29. 1 John 1 : 7. 2 : 2. Rom. 3 : 25. 1 Pet. 1 : 18, 19.—[5] Rom. 3 : 24-26. 5 : 1. Acts 13 : 39. Gal. 2 : 16.—[6] Acts 2 : 38. Luke 13 : 3. 24 : 47. Acts 20 : 21. 26 : 20.—[7] John 3 : 16. Mark 16 : 15, 16. Acts 16 : 31.—[8] Mat. 11 : 28. John 3 : 36. 6 : 40. 7 : 37. Rev. 22 : 17.

ART. 7. We believe in the necessity of such repentance for sin as springs from a knowledge of its evil nature and tendency,[1] and from sincere love to God,[2] and is evinced by a holy life;[3] and of such faith in Jesus Christ, as includes an affectionate submission to him,[4] and reliance on him for pardon and eternal life.[5]

[1] Rom. 7: 13. Eze. 36: 31. Tit. 2: 11, 12. 2 Tim. 3: 13. Jer. 44: 4.—[2] Mat. 22: 37–40. John 14: 23. Rom. 2: 4. Luke 22: 61, 62.—[3] Mat. 3: 8. 1 John 3: 3. John 14: 21. Rom. 12: 1. 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17. Eph. 1: 4. 1 Pet. 1: 15, 16. Heb. 12: 10, 14.—[4] John 14: 1. 15: 14. Acts 9: 16. 1 Cor. 2: 16. Phil. 2: 5. Rom. 8: 9. 1 Pet. 2: 13.—[5] Ps. 25: 11. Acts 4: 12. 5: 31. 13: 38. Eph. 1: 7. John 3: 15. 10: 28. 17: 2, 3. Rom. 5: 21.

ART. 8. We believe that mankind have all the natural ability to comply with the requirements of the gospel;[1] but that such is their love of sin,[2] that this compliance never takes place, except by the special influence of the Holy Ghost.[3]

[1] Josh. 24: 15. Mat. 11: 28, 29. John 5: 40. Rev. 22: 17.—[2] Jer. 13: 23. 1 John 2: 15. John 3: 19. Hos. 4: 17.—[3] Ps. 110: 3. 1 Cor. 2: 14. Tit. 3: 5. Mark 12: 30, w. Rom. 5: 5. Gal. 5: 22, 23. John 15: 5. Eph. 2: 8. 2 Tim. 1: 9. Rom. 3: 24, w. 11: 6.

ART. 9. We believe that all who truly embrace the gospel, were chosen in Christ from eternity,[1] and that they are saved, not by works of righteousness which they have done, but through the distinguishing mercy of God in Jesus Christ.[2]

[1] Eph. 1: 4, 5. 1 Pet. 1: 2. John 15: 16, 19. 13: 18. Rom. 8: 28–30. 9: 11–16. 2 Tim. 1: 9. 2 Thes. 2: 13, 14.—[2] Tit. 3: 5. Rom. 3: 20, 28, 31. Gal. 2: 16, 21. Acts 13: 39. Gal. 3: 10, 11, 21–26.

ART. 10. We believe that a radical change of moral character, or renovation of the heart, usually called regeneration, is essential to salvation,[1] and that this change is always produced by the special influences of the Holy Spirit.[2]

[1] John 3: 3, 5, 7. Gal. 6: 15. 2 Cor. 5: 17. Eph. 4: 22–24. 1 Cor. 6: 11. Rom. 12: 2. Heb. 12: 14.—[2] John 1: 13. 3: 5, 6. 6: 44. 5: 42, w. Rom. 5: 5. Tit. 3: 5. Acts. 16: 14. Eze. 36: 26. 2 Thes. 2: 13, 14.

ART. 11. We believe that all those who are truly "born of God," will persevere in holiness unto life eternal,[1] and that they will finally be justified, on the ground of their faith in Christ alone,[2]—good works being the evidence of that faith, but not the ground of justification.[2]

[1] Phil. 1: 6. John 6: 37, 39. 10: 27–29. Ps. 37: 23–25. Job 17: 9. 1 Pet. 1: 5. John 3: 36. Mat. 24: 24. 1 John 2: 19. Rom. 8: 28–30, 38, 39.—[2] Rom. 3: 28. 5: 1, 9. Acts 4: 12. Gal. 5: 4.—[3] Jas. 2: 17, 18, 22. 3: 13. 1 John 3: 17.

ART. 12. We believe that Christ has a church on the earth,[1] in which he has instituted the sacraments of baptism[2] and the Lord's supper;[3] the former to be administered to believers[4] and their offspring;[5] the latter to believers only.[6]

[1] Mat. 16: 18. 18: 17. Rom. 12: 4, 5. Eph. 1: 22, 23. 5: 23–25. Acts 14: 23. 20: 17. Phil. 1: 1. 1 Cor. 1: 2.—[2] Mat. 28: 19. Acts 2: 38, 41. 8: 12, 36, 37.—[3] Mat. 26: 26–30. 1 Cor. 11: 23–29. Luke 22: 19, 20.—[4] Mark 16: 16. Acts 8: 37.—[5] Gen. 17: 7–14. Rom. 15: 8. Heb. 8: 6. Gal. 3: 29. Mark 10: 13–16. Rom. 4: 11–16. Acts 2: 39. 1 Cor. 7: 14. Acts 16: 15, 33. 1 Cor. 1: 16. Ps. 50: 16.—[6] Ex. 12: 48. Mat. 22: 12. 1 Cor. 10: 21. 11: 27–29. 5: 11, 13. Tit. 3: 10. 2 Thes. 3: 6. Gal. 6: 1. 2 Cor. 6: 14–18.

ART. 13. We believe there will be a general resurrection of the dead;[1] and a day of general judgment, when the whole human family will be separated into two great classes, the righteous and the wicked; and the sentence then passed on each will be decisive and final;[2] that the happiness of the righteous will be eternal, and the misery of the wicked also without end.[3]

[1] John 5: 28, 29. Acts 24: 15. 1 Cor. 15: 22, 35–44. Phil. 3: 21. 1 Thes. 4: 15–17.—[2] Acts 17: 31. 2 Cor. 5: 10. Mat. 12: 36, 37. 25: 31–46. 13: 36–43, 47–50. Rev. 20: 12–15.—[3] Mat. 25: 46. John 3: 36. Mat. 13: 36–50. Luke 16: 26. 2 Thes. 1: 9. Rev. 14: 11. 21: 8. Mark 3: 29. Luke 16: 22–26.

ART. 14. Believing that it will be for our (your) mutual comfort and edification, as well as for the glory of God, we (you now) make a public and solemn profession of our (your) faith in Christ,[1] and, without reserve, dedi-

cate ourselves (yourselves) to him who has loved us (you), and washed us (you) in his own blood.[2]

[1] Mat. 10: 32, 33. Luke 22: 19. 2 Cor. 6: 16–18.—[2] Rom. 12: 1, 2. Eph. 3: 19. Rev. 1: 5. 7: 14.

All this we (you) truly believe, and cordially profess?

[Here baptize, in receiving those not previously baptized.]

You will now enter into covenant with God and with this church.

COVENANT.*

"You do now give up yourselves to that God, whose name alone is Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, cleaving to God, the Father, as your chief good; and unto the Lord Jesus Christ, as your only Saviour, the Prophet, Priest and King of your souls; and to the Spirit of God as your only Sanctifier and Comforter. And you do give up yourselves, one unto another in the Lord, covenanting to walk together as members of the church of Christ, in all the ways of his own institutions, agreeable to the prescription of his holy word, promising that with all tenderness and brotherly love, you will faithfully watch over one another's souls, and that you will freely yield yourselves to the discipline and power of Christ in his church, and attend those

* This Church Covenant, gathered out of God's word, was adopted by the First Church in Scituate as their covenant, March 12, 1710–11, and renewed by said church, Feb. 6, 1825. The conclusion was appended Nov. 4, 1842.

seals and censures, and whatever ordinances Christ has appointed, so far forth as the Lord by his word and Spirit hath or shall reveal to you to be your duty; and wherein you fail and come short of duty, to wait upon him for pardon and remission, beseeching him to make your spirit steadfast in his covenant, and to own you among his covenant people for ever. Amen."

This you severally profess and engage?

[Here the members of the church will rise.]

In consequence of these professions and engagements, we, the members of this church, affectionately receive you to our communion and fellowship, and in the name of Christ declare you entitled to all its privileges. We welcome you to this fellowship with us in the blessings of the gospel, and on our part engage to watch over you, to love and to pray for you, and seek your edification, as long as you shall continue among us. Should you have occasion to remove, it will be your duty to seek, and ours to grant, a recommendation to another church; for hereafter you can never withdraw from the watch and communion of the saints, without a breach of covenant.

And now, beloved in the Lord, let it be impressed on your minds, that you have entered into solemn obligations, from which you can never escape. Wherever you go, these vows will be upon you. They will follow you to the bar of God, and in whatever world you may be fixed, will abide upon you through eternity. You can never again be as you have been. You have unalterably committed yourselves, and henceforth you must be the servants of God. Hereafter the eyes of

the world will be upon you, and as you demean yourselves, so religion will be honored or disgraced. If you walk worthy of your profession, you will be a credit and comfort to us; but if it be otherwise, it will be an occasion of grief and reproach. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

May the Lord guide and preserve you till death, and at last, receive you and us to that blessed world, where our love and our joy shall be for ever perfect. Amen.

LIST OF MEMBERS

CONNECTED WITH THIS CHURCH, SINCE THE SEPARATION IN 1825,

WITH ITS PRESENT OFFICERS.

PASTOR.

REV. DANIEL WIGHT, JR.

Ordained Sept. 28, 1842.

DEACONS.

ISRAEL CUDWORTH,

Chosen May 29, 1831.

MARSHALL LITCHFIELD,

Chosen April 11, 1841.

MEMBERS.

(*) Denotes those deceased. (L) Denotes those received by letter.
(‡) Denotes those excommunicated. (†) Denotes those dismissed by letter.

Names.	Admitted.	Remarks.
*Dea. Israel Litchfield,	July, 1776.	Chosen Dea., 1778; died Jan. 15, 1840,
*Stephen Mott,	" "	Died Jan. 27, 1837, aged 85. [aged 87.
*Abigail Mott,	" "	Wife of Stephen, died Sept. 15, 1835.
Dea. Calvin Jenkins,	March, 1793.	Chosen deacon, March 9, 1828.
*Elizabeth Jenkins,	§	Wife of Calvin, died Nov. 1835, aged 85.
*Dea. Ward Litchfield,	March, 1794.	Chosen Dea., Mar. 9, 1828; died May 1,
*John Studley,	Oct. 1798.	Died Dec. 1, 1843, aged 84. [1830, aged 73.
Sarah Studley,	" "	Wife of John.
*James Turner,	Sept. 1801.	Died Jan. 24, 1835, aged 57.
*James Jenkins,	§	Died Dec. 20, 1831, aged 82.
Celia Peakes,	§	Wife of Eleazar. [aged 74.
*Sarah Merritt,	§	Wife of Nehemiah, died May 15, 1833,
*Anne Bailey,	§	Wife of Paul, died May 23, 1840, aged 85.
*Sarah Bailey,	§	Wife of Abner, died July 1, 1833, aged 82.
‡Betsy Jones,	§	Excommunicated, Dec., 1831.
Mary Wall,	§	Wife of Walter.
Eleazar Peakes,	May, 1823.	
*Rowland Litchfield,	" "	Died Oct 30, 1828, aged 70.
*Charles Curtis,	" "	Died Feb. 23, 1841, aged 74.
*Levi Vinal,	" "	Died Jan. 8, 1838, aged 72.
Jacob Vinal,	" "	
Clarissa Vinal,	" "	Wife of Jacob.

§ Dates refused by the Unitarian Church.

Names.	Admitted.	Remarks.
Lydia Peakes,	May, 1823.	Wife of Capt. William.
Mabel Curtis,	" "	Sister of Charles.
Lucy Litchfield,	" "	Daughter of Rowland.
Augustus Cole,	Sept. "	
Sally J. Cole,	" "	Wife of Capt. Augustus. [aged 63.
*Sally Turner,	" "	Wife of Nathaniel, died Nov. 13, 1834,
†Sibel Bailey,	May, 1826.	Wife of Paul. Dis. to Cohasset, Dec. 1838.
Mary Holmes,	" "	Widow of Heman.
Judith Vinal,	" "	Wife of Levi, 2d.
*Lucy N. Ellmes,	" "	Wife of Noah, died Feb. 25, 1841.
Maria Vinal,	July, "	Wife of Paul.
Eliza Vinal,	" "	Wife of Alvyen.
Lucy Brown,	" "	Wife of Charles.
Lot Vinal,	Aug. "	
*Eleanor Vinal,	" "	Wife of Lot, died Mar. 24, 1842, aged 42.
Sophia Litchfield,	" "	Wife of Marshall.
Lydia Litchfield,	" "	Daughter of Rowland.
Eunice T. Studley,	" "	Wife of Liba.
*Betsy Curtis,	" "	Daughter of Charles, died Feb. 4, 1833,
David S. Jenkins,	Nov. "	[aged 32.
Alvyen Vinal,	" "	
*Lucy Jenkins,	" "	Wife of James, died Oct. 14, 1839.
*Gracey Jewett,	" "	Wife of Rev. Paul, died Feb. 20, 1836.
†Anne Merritt,	" "	Wife of Nehemiah; dis. to Salem St. ch.
Thomas Litchfield,	March, 1827.	[Boston, April, 1842.
†Nehemiah Merritt,	" "	Dismissed to Salem St. church, Boston.
Paul Vinal,	" "	
Mary Jenkins,	" "	Wife of Calvin, Jr.
Fanny Holmes,	" "	Widow of Bailey.
†Sarah S. Pratt,	" "	Wife of Benj. Dis. to Cohasset ch., 1838.
Harriet Clapp,	May, "	Wife of Elijah. L. 2d ch. in Abington.
†Sally Brooks,	Aug. "	Dis. to Murray st. ch., N.Y., Dec. 1841.
*Harriet C. Litchfield,	" "	Wife of Ward; died Sept. 30, 1837, aged
Betsy Torrey,	Nov. "	[33.
Israel Cudworth,	June, 1828.	
Mabel Cudworth,	" "	Wife of Israel.
Nancy Cushing,	Aug. "	Wife of George; L. from Hanover.
Nancy Cushing, 2d.,	" "	Daughter of George.
Sally Bowker,	Sept. "	L. from Green St. ch., Boston.
*Hannah Turner,	Aug. 1829.	Widow of Perez; died June 5, 1842.
Deborah Colman,	Sept. 1830.	Wife of Joseph.
Mercy L. Briggs,	May, 1831.	Wife of Cushing O.
†Jacob Whitcomb,	" "	Dis. May, 1839, to ch. in Cohasset.
†Jane Whitcomb,	" "	Wife of Jacob. Dis. do.
Sophia Litchfield,	Nov. "	Wife of Thomas.
Calvin Jenkins, Jr.,	March, 1832.	
Abigail Curtis,	" "	Wife of Charles.
Betsy Jenkins,	" "	Daughter of Calvin.
Almira Cushing,	" "	Daughter of George.
Marshall Litchfield,	May, "	
*Laura Stodder,	June, "	L. First ch. Randolph, died 1832.
Relief G. Knapp,	Nov. "	Wife of Otis.
Fanny Jacobs,	" "	[1837, aged 22.
*Deborah Turner,	Sept. 1834.	Daughter of Chas. Henry; died June 4,
†Rev. Chas. T. Torrey,	Oct. 1835.	L. from Andover; Dis. Providence 1837.
†Rev. Luke A. Spofford	Dec. "	L. Atkinson, N.H. Dis. May 1836, Amherst
†Maria Spofford,	" "	Wife of Rev. Luke. L. and dis. do.

Names.	Admitted.	Remarks.
†Mary Spofford,	Dec. 1835.	Daughter of Rev.L., L.and dis.Amherst.
Hannah Turner,	Sept. 1839.	Wid. of Col. Chas.; L.fr. ch.in Chelsea.
†Sophia T. Smith,	July, 1840.	Wife of Rev. Phinehas, L. Centreville,
Caleb Osborne,	May, 1841.	[N.Y. Dis.Sept.1841,to North-
Abigail Nichols.	" "	[ampton, Mass.
Josiah Stoddard,	" 1842.	
Edward James,	" "	
J. Edwin Briggs,	" "	
Harrison O. Briggs,	" "	
Calvin Jenkins, 3d.,	" "	
Maria L. Cushing,	" "	Daughter of George.
John D. Torrey,	July, "	
Mary A. Torrey,	" "	Wife of John D.
Warren Litchfield,	" "	
Martin T. Peakes,	" "	
James W. Cudworth,	" "	
Lydia Y. James,	" "	Wife of Dr. James.
Mary Litchfield,	" "	Wife of Justin.
Eliza C. Jenkins,	" "	Wife of David S.
Mary A. Osborne,	" "	Wife of Caleb.
Mary C. Litchfield,	" "	Daughter of Justin.
Helen A. Litchfield,	" "	do.
Elizabeth Litchfield,	" "	Daughter of Rufus.
Lydia V. Cudworth,	" "	Daughter of Israel.
Eliza A. Hobson,	" "	Daughter of Aaron.
Bathsheba Litchfield,	" "	Daughter of Rufus. L. from Brooklyn,
Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.	Nov. "	L. from ch. in Natick. [N. Y.
Lucy F. Wight,	" "	Wife of Rev.Daniel, L.ch.in Calais,Me.
Henry B. Dana,	" "	L. from ch. in Woodstock, Vt.
Harriet C. Dana,	" "	Wife of Henry B.; L. do.
Levi Vinal, 2d,	" "	
James Damon,	" "	
George P. Perry,	" "	Son of Calvin.
Amos M. Litchfield,	" "	Son of Orange.
Elvira J. Perry,	" "	Daughter of Calvin.
William Stoddard,	May, 1843.	
Sarah A. Stoddard,	" "	Wife of William.
Harriet S. Dana,	Jan. 1844.	Daughter of Henry B.; L. from ch. in
Matilda F. Harrub,	" "	Wife of Darius. [Woodstock, Vt.
Darius Harrub,	March,"	
Elizabeth Litchfield,	May, "	Wife of Orange.
Benj. S. Waterman,	" "	
Xoa Ellmes,	July, "	Wife of Lewis.
Martha A. Brown,	" "	Widow of Enos.

Members before the separation, who withdrew, - - - - -	28
" received since, by profession, - - - - - - -	80
" " " " letter, - - - - - - - - - -	15
Total, - -	123
Members deceased, - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	24
" dismissed by letter, - - - - - - - - - - -	12
" excommunicated, - - - - - - - - - - -	1
	37
Present number, - - -	86

APPENDIX.

As the records of this church were kept by the pastor, when the Rev. Mr. Thomas had been dismissed, as before related, he still retained those records in his own hands, and it was with some difficulty, that even a copy of the ancient covenant was obtained. In order to make out a complete list of our own members, since the separation, reference must be had to those records for the dates of admission of those, who came off as the majority. On the first application made (March 5) to the Rev. E. Q. Sewall, for those dates, he very politely and cheerfully granted the request, and most of the dates were found. But on making a second application (April 8) for the few remaining, the whole tone of feeling seemed to be changed. The records could not be seen, or another date be had. There were fears we had already seen those records too much,—lest a knowledge of the contents of those volumes if published, would injure them! The subject had been presented to his people the day previous, in respect to our verbal requests for these dates, and also the privilege of copying the ancient records entire. They adjourned to the 17th inst., for the further consideration of the subject.

At this meeting of adjournment, a committee of two was chosen to make known to us their wishes to have our requests (before simply verbal, but well understood,) put in writing. The following note was accordingly sent.

"To the Rev. E. Q. Sewall, and the Society under his ministerial charge:

Having been informed through your committee that the verbal requests for certain privileges, before made known through the Rev. E. Q. Sewall, should be made in writing, the undersigned, as a committee in behalf of the church with which he is connected, submits the following:

First, We ask the privilege of copying a few dates from the ancient records of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, now in the hands of the Rev. E. Q. Sewall.

Secondly, We ask the privilege of copying those records, previous to May 1st, 1825, entire or in part, as may be thought expedient on examination.

Respectfully yours,

DANIEL WIGHT, JR."

April 18, 1844.

The following is the reply from the Rev. E. Q. Sewall, dated,

"Monday, April 22, 1844.

To the Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr., and the church with which he is connected:

A paper from your hands, having come to me, with the following address; viz., 'To the Rev. E. Q. Sewall, and the Society under his ministerial charge,' and purporting to be in answer to a communication made to you, through a committee of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, chosen at a regular meeting of that body, on Wednesday of last week, with reference to a previous verbal request from yourselves; I have to reply that this paper cannot be made use of by me, since no action of the 'Society' or parish under my 'ministerial charge,' has ever been had upon the subject matter thereof.

Respectfully yours,

E. Q. SEWALL."

To this personal letter was returned the following;

"Tuesday, April 23, 1844.

To the Rev. E. Q. Sewall:

Dear Sir, In your communication of the 22d instant, you say that the 'paper,' addressed to you and the Society under your ministerial charge, 'cannot be made use of by you, since no action of the Society, or parish under your ministerial charge, has ever been had upon the subject matter thereof.'

We are well aware, that said Society had not taken, at least, any decisive action on the subject, and accordingly it was the very object of that paper to call upon them for such action.

You cannot, dear Sir, expect that we should address you, or your people, as the "First Church of Christ in Scituate,' as we believe ourselves to be that body, and are not aware of the existence of another First Church of Christ in Scituate.

Respectfully yours,

Daniel Wight, Jr.,

In behalf of his church."

We may here subjoin some of the reasons for not addressing any particular church, as connected with the ministerial charge of the Rev. E. Q. Sewall.

1. The fact, that after the majority of the church had regularly dismissed their pastor, and withdrawn from the old Society in 1825, as the First Church of Christ in Scituate, agreeable to advice of council, the remainder have since taken no regular measures, that we have heard of, to re-organize themselves into a church of any form.

2. The fact, that if any church exists in connection with the first Society in Scituate, the name of that church, as entitled to be called *the First*, is now in dispute. They cannot expect that we should address them as "the First Church of Christ in Scituate," while we believe ourselves to be that church. We had other reasons, but these we regarded as abundantly sufficient to justify the form of our address in the first written communication. But as no further notice or reply was made to it, after waiting a reasonable time, we sent the following, not wishing to

leave any consistent and reasonable effort untried. Their committee had acknowledged, that they were usually called, and called themselves, a Unitarian church. Hence the following form of address.

"Friday, May 10, 1844.

To the Rev. E. Q. Sewall, and the Unitarian Church * with which he is connected:

Having been informed (directly and indirectly), with respect to our former requests, addressed 'to the Rev. E. Q. Sewall, and the Society under his ministerial charge,' for certain privileges, connected with the ancient records of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, that those requests will not be presented, and accordingly not granted, in consequence of the form of our address; we therefore, renewedly address you, agreeably to the acknowledgments of your own committee, hoping you will now grant the favors we solicit. You cannot surely require that we should address you as 'the First Church of Christ in Scituate,' while we believe ourselves to be that body, agreeably to ecclesiastical usage. It would be unreasonable in you to expect this, in the present unsettled state of the question between us, as to our respective appropriate names.

Our simple requests are, First, the privilege of copying a few dates from the ancient records of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, now in the hands of Rev. E. Q. Sewall. Secondly, the privilege of copying those records previous to May 1, 1825, entire or in part, as may be thought expedient on examination. Thirdly, we respectfully ask for a written and definite reply to the above communication.

Respectfully yours,

DANIEL WIGHT, JR.,

In behalf of the church with which he is connected."

No particular reply has been made to either of our communications, except as given above. Like their predecessors, they still choose to "have nothing to do with the subject."

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* The adjective "Unitarian," sufficiently qualifies the term "church," and renders this last address perfectly consistent with the former, and the subjoined reasons.

ERRATA.

Page 12, line 7, add *Hayward Pierce.
" " " 8, for "*ten*" read "*eleven.*"
" " " 28, for "a clear majority," read "an equal number."

N. B. The above errors were occasioned from want of access to the

AN

ECCLESIASTICAL CONTROVERSY:

CONTAINING THE

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

HON. JOHN B. TURNER,

MEMBER OF THE FIRST PARISH,

AND

REV. DANIEL WIGHT, JR.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH

IN

SCITUATE, MASS.

WITH AN APPENDIX AND NOTES.

BOSTON:
SAMUEL N. DICKINSON, PRINTER.
1845.

PREFACE.

TRUTH ever seeks the light and courts investigation, while the more it is examined the brighter it shines. *Error*, on the contrary, ever seeks the shades, and vanishes on the approach of true light. It is believed that the correctness of these obvious principles, is in some degree illustrated and enforced in the following pages.

The principal questions at issue in this discussion, are the following: — First, whether or not the charge of 'false statements,' alleged against Rev. Mr. Deane's account of 'The Separation,' given in his 'History of Scituate,' is sustained; Secondly, whether or not Rev. Mr. Thomas was properly dismissed as *Pastor* of the First Church in Scituate, in April, 1825; Thirdly, who are *now* the true First Church of Christ, in Scituate; and, finally, whether the *Orthodox* or *Unitarians* have the moral and just claim to the funds (a part or the whole) now in the hands of the Unitarian Church and Society. As all these points have been contested, it is important that they should be decided truly, and with justice to all parties concerned, and that without delay. The unsettled and agitated state of such questions, must alike disturb the peace, good-will, and prosperity of any community so involved.

The Correspondence has been much protracted, in consequence of a most unjust and uncalled for attack upon our Puritan fathers, and especially the early ministers, relative to their conduct in the Indian war and the Salem witchcraft. These points have been dragged in, as it would seem, without the least provocation, and to no purpose, except it be to malign and abuse a class of the most worthy men that have lived in all modern times. Such attempts, however, have usually recoiled with a tenfold power, upon the persons who have had the effrontery thus unjustly to assail them.

The Notes were not contained in the original letters, but have been since appended; not, however, because the points were left defenceless and weak on the side of 'The Church,' but that the truth might be more fully illustrated and speedily established. Some of them have been added, to give information on important subjects, intimately connected with the discussion.

In the preface to our 'Church Manual' it was observed, after alluding to its origin and design, 'that we disclaim any intention to awaken controversy, or to continue it, if awakened.' We believed that 'the candid, unvarnished statement of well-attested facts,' therein contained, was designed and well adapted to allay controversy — to show all concerned the truth, and thus 'to settle the question on its true basis.' The following discussion, it is believed, clearly proves that those facts *were* 'well-attested,' as not one of them has suffered by the assault — they have rather gained additional strength and clearness from the investigation, while other new and

important facts have been educed — a valuable legacy to posterity. It will be seen from all the circumstances, that this controversy was unsolicited on our part, though not feared. In the way of pastoral duties, the 'Church Manual' was prepared; it has been assailed and defended, but with no small intrusion upon my other important and delightful duties. Should further assaults be made, I do not promise further replies, — I am no controversialist, — I desire peace, but peace with the truth. Should the assault, however, be renewed, it is earnestly hoped that it may fall into more able and leisure hands.

It is with reluctance that many of the painful facts herein stated, are submitted to the public, and they should even now be withheld, did not *long-abused justice* call for their publication. If severity in any degree has been employed, it is believed to be the severity of truth only, and of that truth which the public and posterity have a right to demand. If censure fall, therefore, let it fall on the deserving.

My correspondent had called upon me to 'retract my deliberate charge of falsehood against Rev. Mr. Deane, and to make the retraction as *public* as I had made the charge.' But he had also promised, to 'join with me in condemning the falsehoods, and in making them public,' were they successfully pointed out. I had accordingly suggested this duty in my last, by referring to his promise, and also by saying 'if you and I cannot decide, the public must.' He virtually acknowledges the false statements, in his last, though evidently with some reluctance, but says nothing about joining in the publication. It is often said, that 'silence gives consent;' and perhaps in this case it is all I could expect. With these considerations before me, together with the earnest request of many, and the advice and approval of others, I submit these attempts to advance the cause of truth and righteousness to the candor and decision of an impartial public, with mingled feelings of reluctance, cheerfulness, and hope.

SCITUATE, Jan. 1845.

P. S. — Since this work was sent to the press for publication, I have heard incidentally, from an influential person, who has read the Correspondence, that I have been *misinformed* in regard to some of the things therein stated. This may be so; but I will here say, that I have received this information in general, so far as it relates to 'The Separation,' from Church Records made at the time, or from persons ('good, pious, honest men,') who were present and took an active part in the scenes described, or from those who were personally acquainted with the individuals and facts of which they speak. And I would inquire, who are most likely to *be* misinformed, — those who receive information from eyewitnesses and written documents, or those who receive it merely from hearsay, — perhaps second, third, or fourth hand? All agree, that the minority — 'the liberal part of the Church, did not' generally 'attend the Church meetings.'

TESTIMONIALS.

The following important Testimonies in favor of the 'Church Manual,' often referred to in this Correspondence, are here prefixed. It will be seen by referring to the 'Manual' that they are furnished by the only surviving Pastors of the Ecclesiastical Council at Scituate, in April, 1825. Rev. Mr. Thomas was Moderator, and Rev. Mr. Perkins Scribe of that Council.

We, the subscribers, having been more or less intimately acquainted with the history of the First Church in Scituate, from the date of its difficulties with its Pastor, Rev. Mr. Thomas, in 1825, and having carefully read the 'Church Manual,' recently prepared and published by Rev. Mr. Wight, can say, with great confidence and cheerfulness, that the statements therein made correspond entirely with our impressions and convictions of the truth in the case. In our opinion, the publication of the 'Manual' is seasonable, and important to the vindication of men, who, in the spirit of our 'Pilgrim fathers,' dared to encounter obloquy and reproach, and to make many and great sacrifices of ease and property, in defence of 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' It is important, too, as a testimony to future generations, of the views entertained by men of clear minds and a pure spirit, who were yet laymen in humble circumstances, of the principles of ecclesiastical order and discipline, on which the Congregational churches of New England originally stood, and still stand. And most cordially do we commend it to the attentive consideration of all into whose hands it may fall.

Richard S. Storrs,
Jonas Perkins.

Braintree, Nov. 18, 1844.

Abington, Jan. 20, 1845.

Rev. Mr. Wight,

Dear Sir: In your letter to me, you request an expression of my views on certain points therein named. In reply, I am free to say that I have no doubt of the seasonableness, propriety, and importance of the publication of your 'Church Manual,' which, in my opinion, was called for by the existing state of things in your place and vicinity, in regard to those matters which are there treated of, and concerning which there has been so much misapprehension and misrepresentation. It is my belief that the 'Manual' sets those things in a true light.

And in particular I here express my firm belief in the correctness of the statements therein made of the facts in respect to the 'Separation' in the year 1825, and of the dismission, by vote of a majority of the Church, of their Pastor, the Rev. Nehemiah Thomas.

For, in the first place, I am clear that churches have authority to dismiss, by vote, their Pastors, or to dissolve their pastoral relation to them, and that

they are to be justified in so doing, whenever there are good reasons for such dissolution. This principle, which is contained in the 'Platform,' was recognized by the Council at Scituate, in 1825, has been recognized by other ecclesiastical councils, and agrees with the usages of Congregational churches.

And in the second place, I am sure, that the First Church in Scituate acted in accordance with the above-mentioned principle, and in a regular manner, in voting the dismission of their Pastor, already named; and that their vote did, to all intents and purposes, dissolve his pastoral relation to them.

I believe too, that their conduct in taking those decisive and important steps, namely, the separation and dissolution, ought to have been commended by all concerned, as it has been and will continue to be by such as, in the spirit of the Puritan fathers of New England, 'earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.'

Yours truly,

DANIEL THOMAS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SCITUATE, Aug. 21, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: In the preface of a 'Church Manual,' prepared, I suppose, by you, and lately published, I find the following. 'The occasion of this long unsettled dispute has doubtless arisen ['principally,' left out] from ignorance of these facts, in connection with *false statements* made in the history of the town.'

Not being able to find any 'false statements' in Mr. Deane's 'History of Scituate,' on the subject of 'The Separation,' I respectfully request you to point them out to me in writing.

Mr. Deane was a resident in Scituate as a minister of the gospel at the time, and, many years before and after the separation, must have been familiar with all the facts in the case; and if 'false statements' are made on that subject, they must have been made knowingly, a crime of which I have heretofore thought Mr. Deane incapable; but if you will point them out, so that I can find them, however much I may be pained by so total a change of opinion respecting the character of Mr. Deane, I will join with you in condemning the falsehoods and in making them public.

The charge of making 'false statements' is a grave charge, deeply affecting the moral character of the person making them; entirely destroying his character as a Christian and a gentleman, and no Christian or gentleman ought to make this charge against another, without being able to point out the reasons therefor.

With great respect,

JOHN B. TURNER.

SCITUATE, Aug. 24, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: I received yesterday, through the post-office, a communication from you, requesting me to point out in writing

certain 'false statements,' alleged by me to be found in Rev. Mr. Deane's 'History of Scituate,' in regard to 'The Separation.'

On receiving this communication, I prepared a somewhat full reply; but on further reflection, must beg the privilege of withholding it for the present, as I understand a reply is to be made to our 'Church Manual,' in which this charge is found. We had repeatedly solicited the privilege of consulting the ancient records of our Church, now in the hands of Rev. E. Q. Sewall, but were denied the privilege, after one very brief perusal, on the ground, 'it was feared we were about to publish something to the injury — of a party concerned — and they did not wish to assist us by furnishing *facts*.' This was the reason, substantially, as near as I can recollect. We now say, that we do not wish to furnish materials for the forthcoming reply, which may, with more propriety, be reserved till after that reply shall appear. I will say, however, that the 'charge' respecting 'false statements' was not made without deliberation, and I stand ready to point them out, (as I think I can do, to the satisfaction of every candid, unprejudiced mind,) as soon as the anticipated reply shall be published; or, if I have been misinformed in respect to such a reply being published, and you will inform me as to this fact, I will forward my now reserved communication immediately. Yours truly, with great respect,

DANIEL WIGHT, JR.

SCITUATE, Aug. 27, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: I received yours of the 24th, last Saturday evening, and in reply can answer, that, so far as I know and believe, no reply is intended to your 'Church Manual.' My own feelings in that respect are, that if you truly and sincerely believe your services will be more acceptable to God by claiming to be the *first* Church, or even the *only* Church, I have no wish to dispute either or both, but should you make the claim from motives of pride or vanity — the *honor* of being called the first Church or only Church — you might be easily met on either claim. As I cannot think you make the claim from the latter motives, I pass the subject.

I thought, on reading your preface, that, unless you had found something in Mr. Deane's 'History of Scituate,' more than had met my eye, you had made an assertion you ought not to have done, to the injury of his moral character and disreputable to his memory, which I fondly cherish, having been on terms of friendship, (and, considering our different walks in life,) I might even say intimacy with him when living. I cannot feel willing that his character or memory should be injured without sufficient cause. This induced me to write to you, and not, as your letter

would seem to imply, that I am one of a conspiracy to draw something from you to be used to the injury of your Society. So far am I from this, that, could I promote the good of your Society, without injury to others, I would do it with as much alacrity as I granted a warrant for its organization.

With great respect,

JOHN B. TURNER.

SCITUATE, Aug. 23, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: I have just received your communication, inquiring into the truth or falsity of a certain charge, made by me in the preface to our 'Church Manual,' respecting 'false statements made in the history of the town,' touching the subject of 'The Separation.'

If I have been led to make a false charge, I can assure you it was wholly unintentional, and when it shall be pointed out and *established*, I hope I shall be willing to acknowledge the crime and repent of it. What I have written in respect to this subject has been written with deliberation, and I trust with candor, not to *injure* any individual or body of individuals, but to *benefit*. It is in this aspect I view your own communication. It is not truth, but error, which injures mankind. Truth is 'a pearl of great price,' and should you convince me of error and lead me to see the truth, I should still feel that *I* had gained an important victory, as well as *you*. The truth — not error — will bear investigation. I rejoice that any are disposed to examine the subject proposed in your letter, and thank you, dear Sir, most heartily, for your kind attention and inquiry.

I will here simply state, that in our 'Manual,' we did not wish to assume a *controversial* aspect, though necessity was laid upon us to do so in some degree; we might have said much more, but this desire restrained us. Hence, we did not point out more definitely those 'false statements' referred to. But, at your request, I now cheerfully point them out, as I find them presented to me in authentic records, made at the time, by persons acting in those scenes which they describe. Being eyewitnesses of what they record, I must believe their united testimony to be true, even in preference to that of the Rev. Mr. Deane, who was not an eyewitness (as I suppose); at least, I must believe them true till clearly shown to be false by satisfactory evidence.

You will find the 'false statements,' to which I more particularly referred, on page 58 of Mr. Deane's 'History,' in the following paragraph:

'In A. D. 1824, a number of persons in the First Church and Society, became desirous to introduce a Church Covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity; but not having a majority

of the Church, and having less than one fourth of the Parish, which were ready to favor their views at that time, they seceded and formed a new Society.'

If I can rely on the authentic 'Records,' referred to above, I think I can show at least *two*, if not *three* 'false statements,' in this one paragraph.

First, it is said, 'A number of persons in the First Church and Society became desirous to *introduce* a church covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity,' &c. This was not the fact, if our 'Records' are true. The covenant here referred to was adopted, word for word, by this same First Church, March 12, 1710–11, and, at the time referred to, *this Church had already stood on that covenant* for more than a century. Furthermore, this same Church actually *renewed* this covenant at a church meeting, regularly notified by the Pastor, and over which he presided in person, Feb. 6, 1825. At an adjourned meeting, the Church also '*voted*, That the Rev. Mr. Thomas be requested to transcribe *the covenant* found on the old church book on the present church book.' That covenant I have seen on the *old records*, and this is the very covenant on which our Church now stands, as renewed Feb. 6, 1825.*

It appears, that this covenant had been, for a time, neglected by their then present Pastor, and that the Church regarded themselves in a 'loose state,' both in regard to their *Covenant* and *Confession of Faith*. Feeling this to be their condition, 'a large majority of the Church,' signed a communication to the Pastor, requesting him to appoint a meeting for the purpose of investigating this subject. They were led to examine the 'Records,' and 'having found an old covenant on the church records, on which this Church has stood for more than a century, to which some of the brethren wished to pay further attention, it was therefore voted to adjourn said meeting to the 25th of December.' See 'Manual,' for proceedings and results.

Now I ask, in view of all the facts, does Mr. Deane's 'History' give a correct view of the subject? Would not an impartial and candid reader suppose, from his statement, that the Church had previously been Unitarian, from time immemorial; at least, that it had not been Trinitarian; and now, for the first time, some few, — 'a number,' — wished for some innovation, to introduce something new, namely, a church covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity? I ask, in all candor, if such be not

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* *Dark lines* are drawn around the sentence, expressing the doctrine of the *Trinity* in this covenant, as recorded on the old 'Records.' I am informed by one who was a member of this Church at the time, that Mr. Thomas told him, in company with another member, now deceased, that these lines were drawn by Rev. Mr. Deane, who said that the doctrine was *not true*, and therefore ought to be *erased!* The dark lines are there, and such is the testimony; whether true or false, and, if true, by what authority this erasure was made, the 'Records' ought to inform us.

the representation, — if such be not the natural impression, from reading Mr. Deane's statement, — and I ask if it be not *false*? Was not this a Trinitarian Church when established, in 1634? Again, in 1710–11, when our present church covenant was *adopted;* and again in February, 1825, when that covenant was *renewed*, word for word? And did not this same Trinitarian Church secede from the old Society, in April, 1825? If so, are we not still not only the First *Trinitarian* Church of Christ in Scituate, but the *First Church* in Scituate? I do not ask for civil law to decide such a question, but do not the facts, the Bible, and common sense so decide?

Secondly. Mr. Deane says, 'But not having a majority of the Church, — which were ready to favor their views,' &c. As we have seen, the Trinitarian covenant was regularly *renewed* and adopted by the Church more than two months previous to the secession. Could it have been thus renewed and adopted, without a majority acting in its favor? Or is it said, only a part of the Church was present? I am not aware that this was the fact; but, if so, why was not another meeting called, and the vote reconsidered? Indeed, other meetings were called, and confirmed that vote. It is most evident, that *a clear majority of the Church* were in favor of the old covenant, — not a new one introduced, — both from the fact, that a majority acted in favor of Mr. Thomas's dismission, and that several others of the minority soon after withdrew and united with Trinitarian churches. Again, I ask, in view of these facts, if it be *true*, that they had not 'a majority of the Church,' 'which were ready to favor their views at that time?' Then is Mr. Deane's statement false.

Thirdly. The secession and formation of the new Society is represented as taking place at that time, namely, in 1824, but which did *not* till April, 1825. This, I know, is immaterial, but is, nevertheless, a false statement.

I now ask, in conclusion, if I had not strong reasons for the charge I have made? I know it is a 'grave charge,' and one I would not make for my right hand, without just cause in my own mind. I know I may be mistaken, — I was not on the ground, as you say Rev. Mr. Deane was, but the testimony is clear and abundant, both from written documents and from numerous persons, with whom I am acquainted, and whom I must regard as persons of truth, till proved false. You are aware, Dear Sir, that there is prejudice, and there is interest, connected with this subject. Why can we not speak out the convictions of the heart? It will, — it must all, one day be disclosed, — to our shame, if we hide the light, — to our honor, if we stand by the truth. As the Pastor of this Church, I cannot but feel interested in its welfare, temporally as well as spiritually. The world know our wrongs, and the wrongs suffered by numerous other churches similarly situated, and the world condemn

the course, though they still cling to it. They may succeed and prosper for a time, but, Sir, alas for their end! But I will not add.

You have requested of me a written reply. Shall I ask too much in requesting the same, giving your candid opinion on the subject, and especially pointing out my errors, if such you still find. I am, Dear Sir, with great respect,

Your humble servant,

DANIEL WIGHT, Jr.

P. S. — Aug. 28, 1844. The preceding pages were penned previously to the note I sent you on Saturday last, as an answer in part to your first communication. In view of your second, which I received last evening, I have a few remarks to add. And first, I will observe, I did not intend to imply in my last, that you were 'one of a (formal) conspiracy to draw something from me to be used to the injury of our Society,' but that, should such a communication have been sent, and afterward a reply be made to our 'Church Manual,' as was expected, from certain reports abroad, it would have been no very strange thing, had that communication been heard from, and perused by others than yourself, and that too without the least blame or impropriety on your part.

I have a word to say, with regard to the *motives* you suggest, as influencing me in defending our claims to the title of *First* Church of Christ in Scituate; — we have never thought, or intended to imply, that ours was the 'only church' in Scituate. I must acknowledge, that I was not a little surprised that (after an attentive perusal of our 'Church Manual') you should suggest all, or either of the motives you mention, to the neglect of the only one we have presented, and that on which, if I know my own heart, we rest our only claim, — that of truth and justice. I believe, Sir, you have entirely mistaken the character of your correspondent, if you suppose him even capable of entertaining, for a moment, such motives as either of those you seem to insinuate. And it may not be improper here to observe, that the moral character of the living should be held sacred as well as that of the dead, till we can establish our charge, or the propriety even of insinuations. And now I have one favor to ask, if you have the time, and are disposed to grant it, namely, that, after perusing my present communications, you will do me the kindness again to peruse our 'Manual,' and point out to me in writing any erroneous statements it may contain, if such there be. I am not aware that there is such a statement in it. It was my most earnest desire and effort, to give a fair and impartial statement of well-attested facts, believing that such a statement was demanded by the existing state of feeling in our midst. If I have erred, I should be happy to learn my errors, and have them pointed out. You, or any one else, will truly show me a great kindness in so doing.

I need not add, in regard to the fact of 'false statements made in the history of the town,' as I believe those are clearly pointed out and established in the enclosed paper. I will only say, that I have no desire to injure the character or memory of the departed, but must still believe that truth and justice should prevail among the living, even though it be found necessary, however painful, to disclose even the crimes of the dead.

I remain, yours, &c.

SCITUATE, Sept. 3, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.,

Dear Sir: Your letter of Aug. 23, and postscript of Aug. 28, came duly to hand through the post-office. I hardly know where to begin a reply, but will take your postscript first. I am sorry you should take any thing I have written as an attack upon your character. I wrote first, simply inquiring concerning Mr. Deane's 'History,' and, after receiving a letter from you, replied that I had no knowledge of a reply to your 'Church Manual,' and intended to convey an idea, that with good intentions I considered your claim of being the First Church of little consequence, — that the laws of the land would remain, be your claim what it might. I intended no offence, and can assure you that it never has been my aim, nor can I think it is my character, to cut to the right and left, amongst the characters of those who differ in opinion from me, whether living or dead.

I had no intention of reviewing your 'Manual,' as my letters to you may show; but as you request me to 'point out to you in writing any erroneous statements it may contain,' I will glance at one or two things among several which seem strange to me.

On page 6, you say 'Mr. Thomas was dismissed,' &c. Dismissed by whom? Not by his Church and Society, for he continued their beloved and respected pastor until his death. It must, therefore, have been done by those not belonging to his Church and Society. A certificate that they were not members of the First Parish, which includes the Church connected with it, is in the hands of the parish clerk, certifying that they had formed themselves into another Society. This is dated April 15, 1825, and it appears by your 'Manual,' that they dismissed Mr. Thomas on the 29th of April, fourteen days after they had availed themselves of the laws of the land and left the First Church and Society, and according to the same laws had no further action or control in the First Parish or the Church connected with it. They might, therefore, with as much propriety, have dismissed Mr. Flint, of Cohasset, or any other minister in the Commonwealth.

On page 14, after stating that 'they still call themselves the First Church,' you say, 'an appeal from the moral and ecclesiastical law to the civil, ["which recognizes no distinction between a church and a society," left out,] as a claim to this title, must be

regarded as wholly futile, by all who regard the laws of God as superior to the laws of man.' Here are things asserted and implied, to which I cannot agree. That the civil law is in opposition to the law of God, and that the ecclesiastical laws are the laws of God. To this I cannot assent. Ecclesiastical laws are nothing more than the production of assemblies of divines, — decrees of councils or synods, unauthorized to enact.* Assemblies composed, no doubt, of grave divines, learned ministers, and pious men, perhaps, but still fallible men, as liable to err as others, and with a spice of the domineering spirit (formerly somewhat prevalent) even more so. I will cite you two instances from the history of our country, in which I believe such men did grossly err.

When the grandson of Massasoit, — the Indian prince who received 'the pilgrims' with open arms, — was always their friend in need, fell into the hands of our ancestors, the question was, what should be done with this innocent boy of some ten or twelve years. As ministers mostly controlled, both in church and state at that time, some of them (the most learned and pious, I suppose, and perhaps the same who made your ecclesiastical laws,) were applied to in the case, and by their decision, which they supported by many Scripture quotations, this unoffending child was sold to hopeless slavery in Bermuda.

The witchcraft delusion, according to history, got up and carried on by ministers, to sustain and increase their then waning power, a few years before the date of the church-covenant, you mention, † and which will always be a stain on the fair name of Massachusetts, is another instance. What hand the actors in these things had in establishing your ecclesiastical laws, I do not know, but, from their reputation as leaders, probably great. Here was a series of cold-blooded murders, as I believe. They would call a person a witch, and then hang him because they called him so. How many suffered an ignominious death in consequence of this lust of power — this priestly ambition, I do not know, but believe some forty or fifty. 'John Proctor,

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* Has Christ given to his Church no authority? Has he laid down no principles, by which it is to be regulated? Must it, therefore, be controlled, in all its offices and duties, and order and discipline, by the civil power? 'Supreme and lordly power over all the churches upon earth, doth only belong to Jesus Christ, who is King of the Church, and the Head thereof.' 'Subordinate church power, under Christ, delegated to them [professed believers] by him, doth belong to them, in such a manner as is before expressed, (chap. 5, sec. 2,) and as flowing from the very *nature* and *essence* of a church; it being natural unto all bodies, and so unto a church body, to be furnished with sufficient power for its own preservation and subsistence.' — *Camb. Plat.* chap. 10, secs. 1 and 2.

† 'It' [witchcraft] 'was the common faith of Christendom, and had been for hundreds of years.'—*Prof. Pond.*

who foresaw his doom, and knew from whom the danger came, sent an earnest petition, not to the governor and council, but to Cotton Mather, and the ministers.' Cotton Mather took one of 'the possessed' into his family, and from her learned many curious things of the invisible world; the most important of which were, that 'demons could not enter his study or touch his person.' But, unfortunately for him, and others engaged with him,* the doctrine that witches were common; that the study of a clergyman was a sanctuary, to which resort might be had to escape the devil; and their persons so holy, that demons could have no power over them; did not continue, if it ever became an article of religious faith. If it had, here would have been an engine of clerical power, at least, equal to the Catholic confessional.

Now you cannot but agree with me, that, in these cases, although grave and learned divines† pronounced these doings strictly according to the laws of God, — produced texts of Scripture plentifully, to prove their assertions in the one case, and denounced vengeance on all who presumed to dispute them in the other, still they were mistaken. The laws of God and the dictates of reason and common sense condemn the proceedings in both cases. Shall we take laws, made by such characters, as the laws of God? I cannot. The assertion that laws prepared by such men, or any other men, are the laws of God does not make them so, even if that assertion is made by a clergyman in a 'Church Manual.'

The human mind was, perhaps, at its lowest state of abasement, when Luther arose, — the day-star preceding the dawn. The feudal system and long years of priestly rule, had brought it to its darkest night of degradation and superstition. Since then it has (with temporary relapses) been continually advancing in the knowledge of truth, both civil and religious. It will continue to progress, nor can king-craft or priest-craft prevent it. The worthy Robinson, at Leyden, (ahead of the age in which he lived,) saw this, when he enjoined it on his people not to stand still with Luther and Calvin, but to be ready to receive truth from other sources ‡ Since the settlement of this country, one superstition after another has fallen before the progress of truth, but there is still room for further progression. It was once, in New England, gravely enacted, that 'no person should make mince-pies, under penalty of ten shillings;' that 'no woman

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* 'Mr.' [Cotton] 'Mather expresses the opinion, that the *judges* proceeded too far, and were chargeable with mistakes, particularly in respect to the kind of evidence which they admitted.'—*Prof. Pond.*

† Judges, and the 'learned' in other professions, pronounced the same opinion. 'Sir Wm. Blackstone, the great oracle of British law, who died no longer ago than 1780, declared his belief in witchcraft.'—*Prof. Pond.*

‡ 'From the written Word of God.'—*Robinson.*

should kiss her child on the Sabbath or fasting-day, under penalty of five shillings.' Now, no one, I believe, thinks mince-pies hurtful to the soul, whatever they may be to the body, and a mother kisses her child on the Sabbath, without thinking she has grievously offended the God of love.

I think you must acknowledge this progress, since the time the grandson of Massasoit was sold a slave, and since the 22d of Sept., 1692, when 'Noyes, the minister of Salem,' while exulting over the dead bodies of eight innocent persons, called by him * witches, cried, 'There hang eight firebrands of hell.' Now, so far am I from admitting that decrees of assemblies of divines of this age and this stamp are the laws of God, that I do not admit they are entitled to the least consideration.

I say nothing of the moral law, for I can see no possible way it can have any bearing on the number of your church. If you say it is immoral to refuse to call it the first, because it violates the ecclesiastical laws we have been reviewing, I can say it is more immoral to call it the first, in violation of the civil law. †

Again, assertions or insinuations that the civil laws are contrary to the laws of God, does not make them so. Human legislation is, I grant, imperfect, and inexpedient laws are sometimes made, but no legislature in Massachusetts would dare enact laws to clash with the Divine laws. Although the clergy do not now, as in the days of the Blue laws, control legislation, or guide the interpretation of the law, the cord between church and state having been severed years ago, still I cannot believe the people of Massachusetts would permit a law, manifestly contrary to the laws of God, to stand on their statute-books an instant.

The days have gone by when the decrees of ecclesiastical councils — decrees of men authorized only to advise, will be generally received and obeyed in opposition to the laws made and interpreted by the authorities appointed by the constitution of government. The men composing such councils are no longer generally regarded with awe and reverence as more than human. They now are only esteemed and loved as their characters may be estimable and lovely. They are now regarded as friends, advisers, and instructors, not as dictators, holding the keys of heaven. And resistance to clerical or religious tyranny is no longer thought to be rebellion against God.

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* 'Seven of the principal citizens and jurists of the Colony, namely: Lieut. Gov. Stoughton, Maj. Saltonstall, Maj. Richards, Maj. Gedney, Mr Wait Winthrop, Capt. Sewall, and Mr. Sergeant,' were constituted 'a court to try the accused persons [supposed witches] at Salem. The Judges first assembled June 2d,' 1692. These 'eight persons' were among the condemned.

† How much better than the ministers were these civil or military officers in the Court, namely: the Captains, Majors, Colonels, Judges, &c.?

This state of things is a natural consequence of the progress of knowledge. This has taught us, that the persons composing these councils are men, *only* men; and their misdeeds and failures, in any respect, may be talked of and even judged of in charity without transgressing the Divine laws. When we examine their characters, as we do the characters of others, we find now and then one (not a *Fair-child* of Christianity, however,) who will pervert the Scriptures for the vilest purposes, and denounce vengeance and woe on others, which we have the happiness of believing to be entirely harmless to those denounced.

Having already written at much greater length than I intended when I began, and as I must of necessity notice some other matters when I answer your letter, which I shall do the first leisure time I find, I will close this.

I might notice the word 'formal' in your postscript, but have no disposition to be captious.

My mind has lately been much engaged in a difficult reference, or I should have replied more promptly.

Respectfully,

JOHN B. TURNER.

SCITUATE, Sept. 7, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: I regret the necessity of being absent from town a week or two, just in the midst of our Correspondence, but previous engagements seem to render this absence unavoidable. When I return, and you shall have sent the remainder of your reply, I will avail myself of the first opportunity in noticing your communications.

Respectfully, yours,

DANIEL WIGHT, Jr.

SCITUATE, Sept. 7, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: You say, in your letter of August 23, 'you will find the false statements to which I more particularly referred, on page 58 of Mr. Deane's "History," in the following paragraph:' 'In A. D. 1824, a number of persons in the First Church and Society became desirous to introduce a church covenant recognizing the doctrine of the Trinity; but not having a majority of the Church, and less than one fourth of the Parish, who were ready to favor their views at that time, they seceded and formed a new Society.' And then you say, 'I think I can show at least *two*, if not *three*, false statements in this one paragraph.' First. 'A number of persons in the First Church and Society became desirous to introduce a church covenant which recognized the doc-

trine of the Trinity.' This you say is false, because 'the covenant here referred to was adopted, word for word, by this same First Church, March 12, 1710, 11.' This will hardly answer your purpose. *You* know, *I* know, and *all* know, as well as we can from common information, that, until sometime after 'they became desirous of introducing a covenant,' they had no knowledge of the existence of any such thing. Their proceedings and views, until 'it was found on the old book,' were the same as though no covenant existed. Take your own version of the affair: 'They were dissatisfied with their loose state with respect to their covenant.' That is, they knew of no covenant and wanted one. 'Having found an old covenant.' It would not have been a thing 'found' had they known of it before, even had it been on the 'old book *two centuries*.' 'The Trinitarian covenant was regularly renewed and adopted more than two months,' &c. They would not have done this, had they not desired to adopt a 'covenant recognizing the doctrine of the Trinity.' The word *renewed* is not applicable until they knew of something *to renew*. Your version then is, 'they were desirous to adopt* a covenant recognizing the doctrine of the Trinity.' You say *adopt*,* Mr. Deane says *introduce;* another might say *establish*. Whether the words adopt, introduce, or establish, had been used by Mr. Deane, three quarters of the community, including myself, would have understood precisely the same thing. I cannot see difference enough to warrant trampling on the ashes of the dead, or indeed any difference at all. If Mr. Deane's statement is false, I do not see but yours must be false also. But according to my recollection of the transactions, the statement gathered from your letter as made out above is correct.

You ask, 'would not an impartial and candid reader suppose from his statement, that the Church had previously been Unitarian from time immemorial, at least, that it had not been Trinitarian?' I can see nothing of what the Church 'had been' in this paragraph; but, as they had at *that time* 'not a majority of the Church and less than one fourth of the Society,' I conclude the Parish *was* not Trinitarian. To find what Mr. Deane says of religious sentiments in the town,† which includes of course the First Parish, look on page 91 of his 'History,' where you will find the following: 'We may say, in general terms, that the doctrines preached and held were on the ground of moderate Calvinism until about 1750.' 'Since 1750, a majority of the people may have been denominated Arminian in their sentiments, and at the present time [1831], as names are now used, a considerable

* To renew their covenant.

† I was examining this paragraph only, — not a remote section.

majority may be termed Unitarian.' I will now ask you, would the candid and impartial reader suppose, from Mr. Deane's 'History,' that the Church had been Unitarian from time immemorial, at least, that it had never been Trinitarian?

Again, you ask me, 'Did not this same Trinitarian Church secede from the old Society, in 1825? If so, are we not still, not only the first *Trinitarian* Church of Christ in S. but the *First Church* in S.? I do not ask for civil law to decide such a question, but do not the facts, the Bible, and common sense so decide?' 'The facts.' No. They seceded, and formed a new Society. 'The Bible.' In what chapter and verse is it recorded that your Church is the First Church in Scituate? 'Common sense.' This is one of the foundations of the civil law, which calls a church an association of some persons belonging to some society or parish, associated for *religious purposes only*, part and parcel of the same society or parish. Does common sense say, if persons dissolve their connection with a parish, leave it, that, by so doing, *they* become said parish instead of the parish left? In this quotation from your letter is another cut at the civil law. As I went into that subject in my last letter, I will pass it here, simply proposing a question for your grave reflection. Is it your duty as a Christian minister or as a worthy citizen thus to inculcate opposition to the laws of the land in which you live? Let the Bible and common sense aid your thoughts in answering this question to your own conscience. Think of it, I entreat you, as becomes a Christian and good citizen.

Secondly. Mr. Deane says, 'but not having a majority of the church, &c. which were ready to favor their views,' &c., and you ask, 'Is not this statement false?' No. Your reasoning, that because the Trinitarian covenant was adopted and sustained 'more than two months previous to the secession,' that there was a majority of the church in its favor, is nullified by your 'Manual,' and by the received opinion at the time of the Church's troubles. My understanding of the matter at the time, and I believe the general understanding was, that the liberal part of the Church did not *attend* the church meetings. The Pastor and perhaps some few others attended a few of the first, until they became satisfied their Orthodox brethren wanted more to control the opinions of others, than peaceably enjoy their own. They then went no more, and let the Orthodox party fix things in their own way. In confirmation of this I have been lately told by a gentleman of respectability and entitled to credit, that he was present at a conversation between two leading churchmen, one of each party, when the Orthodox man, after various arguments in the case, said, 'We must have a church meeting.' 'Have it then,' replied the liberal man, 'I shall not go near you.'

Now, if you please, take your 'Manual.' On page 11, you give

the names of the majority * (as *you* call it). Total, 12. On the next page you give the names of the minority. Total, 10, 'exclusive of the Pastor.' In an errata, very slightly stuck on the last leaf, one other name is added to the minority, making 11, and the Pastor added, 12. They then stood, according to your 'Manual,' 12 and 12. What makes a majority? Besides, among the *majority* 12, was one man who had paid no tax in the Parish, had not partaken the Sacrament with the Church, or been to meeting there but rarely, if at all, for 30 or 40 years. In fact, had entirely withdrawn himself from all participation or action, either in Church or Society. You say, 'he was a member of the Church in *regular* standing,' and count him with your majority!! It was at the time and now is, one of the strangest things in this world, how it was possible, good, pious, honest men, which I believe most of your majority were, could drum up and bring forward to vote the person alluded to. That 'he afterwards reformed,' I rejoice. But would the same men who brought him forward to vote, at that very time, have associated with him in the common intercourse of life? Would they at that time have been willing to be ranked as his intimate friends, or be classed with him as fit companions? You say, 'No course of discipline had been commenced against him.' You doubtless know, that churches holding the religious faith of Mr. Thomas's Society, for reasons satisfactory to themselves, and with which, whether satisfactory to us or not, we have nothing to do, do not expel members even if they think them unworthy. But this man had expelled himself, absolutely and entirely, for 30 or 40 years before the Separation, and morally had no business to come, or rather to be brought forward to count one in a division. I could say much more, but *with* this man, if your 'Manual' is true, they stood 12 and 12. Of course, Mr. Deane is not a liar, for saying 'not having a majority.'*

Thirdly. The secession and formation of the new Society is represented as taking place at "that time," namely, in 1824, but which did not till April, 1825.' 'This is a false statement.'

The secession took place under the law, I believe, of 1823, eight years before the amendment of the Constitution, modifying and amending the third article of the Bill of Rights. Before this amendment, they could not leave one society without joining or forming another. They, no doubt, proceeded legally. Their certificate of separation and formation is signed by the

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* It will be seen, my opponent here confounds two distinct events,—taking facts exclusively from the one to prove the other. The covenant was renewed Feb 6. Rev. Mr. Thomas was dismissed, as Pastor, April 29th,—two very different transactions. Several Trinitarians, voted for the former who did not for the latter.

clerk of the new Society, officially. (They had not then, perhaps, been taught, that disobedience to the civil law was a duty.) Mr. Deane, published his book in 1831, before the amendment of the Constitution. Now what does he say? 'They seceded and formed a new Society.' This tells what they did. 'Their first meeting was held April, 15, 1825.' This tells when they did it. The language is plain and simple, and I can hardly see how it is possible for a candid man, or a man not predetermined to find 'false statements' to understand it as you seem to do.

You say, 'there is prejudice connected with this subject.' I most sincerely believe it. 'There is interest,' some thought so when the 'eleven persons' joined the Church. I then thought that judgment uncharitable. I still believe the 'eleven' joined with good motives, whatever the motives of their advisers might have been. But from this pertinacious adherence to the name *First Church*, and denying the civil law, &c., I have been led to doubt whether, if a certain Rev. Mr. Partridge had been as well acquainted with the law as laid down in the Dedham case, as he was with the Scriptures,* he would not have been so zealous in convincing 'the eleven' that they *must* join the Church.

Several other things in your letter I should like to notice, but, having already gotten to a great length, I forbear.

Perhaps it is needless now for me to say, that, in my opinion, you have entirely failed to maintain your charges against Mr. Deane. Can *you* think, that in an action of slander, and you attempting to prove the truth in justification, that your facts and reasoning would convince a jury that Mr. Deane was a liar? It appears to me you cannot. The charge, you say, you made 'deliberately,' not, then, hastily or carelessly. I shall and must expect that you will retract this deliberate charge of falsehood against Mr. Deane, and make the retraction as public as you make the charge.

As this is probably the last letter I shall write you, I take the opportunity to assure you that I entertain no personal disrespect to you, and can most sincerely join you in wishing 'the welfare both temporal and spiritual' of the religious Society, with which you are connected; and, so far as I know myself, have indulged in no severity of expression or remark, more than I should have done in a similar case, with any one of my own particular religious views. Respectfully, &c.

JOHN B. TURNER.

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* No very great fault. It was the neighboring pastors, however, and not Mr. Partridge, who were more particularly consulted for advice.

SCITUATE, September 13, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: It happened (as it very seldom does) that I did not send to the post-office on Saturday, and did not get your note until the next day. I had before this written and sealed the enclosed. You will perceive by it that I thought our Correspondence was finished, but I shall be happy to receive any communication you may be pleased to make. I propose to spend a part of next week at Boston, and the week after I expect to commence on business, which will keep me from home the most of the time for four weeks, at least, and perhaps more, and writing connected with said business will probably take my leisure time for some time longer. I mention this as a reason for asking your patience to wait a reply, if any is wanting.

I passed some things abruptly in the enclosed, and some without notice, through want of space. Permit me to avail myself of this opportunity to continue the subject.

You say 'there is prejudice and there is interest connected with this subject.' That prejudices did exist at the time of separation, I have no doubt. Religious difficulties are seldom without. But these with the actors at that time, had passed, and were passing rapidly away. Feelings of kindness and mutual interchange of good offices, had begun to prevail, when your 'Manual' appeared, calling up the whole matter anew for discussion and altercation. Reviving remembrances, which mutual love and charity might wish forgotten. And for what purpose? Should you be able to sustain every position you there assume, what benefit can it possibly be to you or your Society? I am unable to see the least, either spiritual or temporal. If any, I wish you would point them out.* You may say you establish the truth. Even if you do, if it is no benefit to any one, what is gained? Is the mere name of *First Church* of sufficient importance to you to justify these things?

Again. The manner of writing in said 'Manual,' impeaching the veracity of a man whose memory a great majority of the town hold in high respect, denouncing those who do not think with you, as regarding the laws of man more than the laws of God, &c. This denouncement includes, I believe, the greater part of persons acquainted with the circumstances, many of whom think your claim of First Church preposterous, and some even ridiculous. Has this a tendency to do away prejudice? Would not a course the opposite to this have better accorded with Christian principles?

'There is interest.' From what follows about 'wrongs,' &c.,

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* See the testimony of the members of the Ecclesiastical Council in 1825, relative to this subject, on pages 5 and 6.

I might be led to think that this was an important consideration with you. With me, I can assure you it has not the least weight. Suppose that a church was a body distinct from a parish, and had civil rights like a parish; and suppose your Church, instead of a claim derived, I know not where, and supported, I hardly know how, had a legal and undisputed right to the name *First Church*, would this give them any kind of claim or right to the property of the *First Parish*? I cannot see that it would, any more than it would give you a right to the property of your neighbor Peakes, or Briggs. If this matter of 'interest' is your main object, in so strenuously persisting in this claim of *First Church*, I regret you had not first examined the subject. This needs no lawyer, plain common sense is sufficient. Had you done this, you might not have read the 'History of Scituate' with eyes so different from others, and might have left old prejudices to wear out.

'They may succeed and prosper for a time; but, Sir, alas, for their end! But I will not add.' What is meant by this I do not exactly know. But whether meant for me, or the religious Society to which I belong, I have nothing to reply. I can truly join in the poet's prayer,

> 'Let not *my* weak, unknowing hand,
> Presume *thy* bolts to throw,
> And deal destruction o'er the land,
> On each I judge thy foe.'

Respectfully,
JOHN B. TURNER.

SCITUATE, September 30, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: Having returned from my previous engagements, and having received the remainder of your communications to my last, I hasten a reply. I was not a little surprised, that you should expect the Correspondence 'finished,' after having sent me such an amount of material, apposite and inapposite, leaving the whole subject in a very unfinished state. As you commenced the Correspondence, propriety requires that I should close it, which I intend to do in the present communication.

Passing over several personal allusions, as unworthy of notice, and believing that your aim and disposition 'to cut to the right and left amongst the characters of those who differ in opinion from' you, 'whether living or dead,' especially if ministers, will be clearly read by those who may peruse your own communications, I come at once to the subject.

The first thing you notice in our 'Manual,' 'among several which seem strange' to you, relates to the dismission of Rev. Mr. Thomas. 'Dismissed,' you inquire? 'By whom? Not by

his Church,' &c. I am glad to find in your letter this acknowledgment; 'the cord between church and state having been severed years ago.' But had you not mentioned this fact, I could have quoted the following more definite passage from the Revised Statutes of Massachusetts. 'The respective churches, connected and associated in public worship with such parishes and religious societies, shall continue to have, exercise, and enjoy all their accustomed privileges and liberties, respecting divine worship, church order and discipline, and shall be encouraged in the peaceable and regular enjoyment and practice thereof.'* In perfect harmony with this, are sections second and fourth † of our 'Church Discipline,' (see 'Church Manual,' p. 19,) with the notes subjoined from 'The Cambridge Platform,' showing that the church and state do not interfere in these respects. The church claims independence of the civil law, and the state acknowledges the claim. So far, then, as we are agreed, let us walk by the same rule. Now it is evident from the above, to a demonstration, that the secession of certain persons from *a society*, does not in the least affect their *church* standing. This is in accordance, I believe, with almost universal practice in evangelical churches. The removal of a church member from one society to another, leaves his church standing untouched, till regularly dismissed by the church and received by letter to another. (See 'Church Manual,' page 18, rule 7.) Circumstances may allow a person to remain for years connected with a church many miles distant from his place of residence. Probably, nearly a third of the members of some of our churches, (where the salary is raised by subscription,) are not technically connected with the Society, as such.

But that a person's church standing is not necessarily affected by removing from a Society, is further evident, from the fact that *the whole* Church may remove in mass, and leave the Society without any Church. If a Church and Society are two things, capable of being 'severed,' as you say they were 'years ago,' this point cannot be controverted. Now, if such a church had a regular pastor before the secession, they would, doubtless, have the same power to dismiss him, as such, after the secession as before. They could not, indeed, dismiss him as the minister of

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* Part I., Title 8, chap. 20, sec. 3.

† '2. Such a company of saints possess all the power which the Lord Jesus Christ has given to his Church on earth; and are authorized and warranted by him, independently of any other body, whether civil or religious, to maintain and exercise in his name, the government and discipline which he has established and enjoined by his supreme authority, in the Holy Scriptures, for the preservation of the peace, order, purity, and happiness of his churches.

'4. It is the duty and the privilege of a Church, to choose and appoint its

the Parish, but only as the Pastor of the church.* Such was the nature of Rev. Mr. Thomas's dismission, except that it was done, not with the entire concurrence of the Church, but by the majority. The Church considered that Mr. Thomas had forfeited his office, as a worthy Pastor, by obstinately refusing, and persevering in refusing to comply with the regular votes and directions of his Church, such as notifying Church-meetings, when requested to by the signature of a majority of the male members, refusing to attend said meetings, and to record their regular votes and proceedings, when requested.† That the majority constitutes the only legitimate power of deciding all proper questions, brought before a church, will not be denied, I presume, by any Congregationalist or Republican. Says Bancroft, our elegant historian, in speaking of Puritanism, 'The church existed independent of its pastor, who owed his office to its free choice; the will of the majority was its law.'‡ This principle of Puritanism still remains in all our Congregational churches. It will be seen from the above considerations, that the 'certificate,' of which you speak, certifying that those who seceded 'were not members of the *First Parish*.' does not in the least interfere with their connection with the *First Church*. How absurd, then, is your assertion, that, 'according to the same laws,' they 'had no further action or control in — the Church!' How absurd, also, your inference, that 'they might therefore, with as much propriety, have dismissed Mr. Flint, of Cohasset, or any other minister in the Commonwealth!'§

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own officers, who are bound, when they are regularly inducted into their offices, to act as the servants of the church, for the promotion of its spiritual interests, in the duties of their appointment.' *Notes*. 'And if the church have power to choose their officers, then, in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, they have power, also, to depose them; for to open and shut, to choose and refuse, to constitute in office and to remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power.' 'The choice of church officers belongeth not to the civil magistrate, as such, or diocesan bishops or patrons; for of these, or any such like, the Scripture is wholly silent, as having any power therein.'—*Camb. Plat.* chap. 8, secs. 7 and 9.—(*See* 'Manual.')

It should be remembered, that 'the Synod, who framed the "Cambridge Platform," was assembled by order of the General Court,—that the members were supported, while in session, at the public charge,—that the "Platform," when framed, was presented to the General Court for their consideration and acceptance, and that the same "was most thankfully accepted and approved,"' Oct. 1648. 'In 1680, the "Platform" was again approved by the General Court, and "ordered to be printed, for the benefit of the churches in present and after times."'

* The reader will please *note* this remark, and the one following.

† The Records, the Council, and survivors furnish this information. Five votes of aggrievance are recorded as passed at one church meeting, April 9th, 1825.

‡ Vol. I. p. 461.

§ My correspondent inquires, 'Does common sense say, if persons dis-

The Ecclesiastical Council convened for the purpose, gave in part, as the result of their deliberations, what has already been published in our 'Manual,' (pages 9 and 10.) They also include in their result, 'Fifthly. If there shall not be a majority of the male members of the said church, who shall at a regular meeting vote, as specified in the last article,' &c. Here follow further directions how to proceed in procuring a dismission and joining other churches, or organizing a new one.* In the conclusion of the result, the Council say, 'They have endeavored to seek the divine guidance, and to regulate themselves by the rules of the gospel, and a regard to the glory of God, and that it is their sincere desire and prayer to the Author of all grace, that in their future proceedings the said First Church in Scituate may look to the great Head of the Church for direction, and may be led to such results, as shall conduce to the advancement of truth and righteousness and the salvation of souls.' It is thus seen, that if the majority of male members were in favor of the previous course, they were to proceed, 'as the First Church;' but if not a majority, to get dismissed and organize anew, or join other churches in the vicinity. But the majority were in favor of the previous course, and their action has been since approved by the neighboring churches.†

But the question, as to the title of First Church, in this case,

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solve their connection with a *parish* — leave it, that by so doing *they* become said parish, instead of the parish left?' To make the cases parallel, 'Suppose a parish, in regular meeting, votes by a large majority to remove from one place of worship to another. Can it not in this way remove? Or will the minority — it may be a mere handful — who choose to remain in the former place of worship, be regarded as the original parish? And so of all voluntary societies.' 'When a church in regular meeting takes up the subject of withdrawing from a parish; deliberates respecting it, solemnly votes to withdraw, and accordingly does withdraw (although it may leave individuals behind), we insist upon it that the church is withdrawn; and we challenge any person acquainted with our history to bring any respectable usage of the country, previous to the late decisions, to countervail the sentiment we have expressed.' But these 'decisions in question — have not been generally acquiesced in, and *will not be*. They were not, in the case of the Church in Dedham. By a great majority of the religious people of this Commonwealth; who know any thing of the circumstances — indeed, we may say all, unless it be the few, whose particular views were met and gratified — *the Church* which separated from the First Parish, ever has been, and is, and will be, considered and denominated *the first* and *original* Church in Dedham, the determination of the court, notwithstanding, and so will the First Church in Scituate. Much as the good people of this Commonwealth are disposed to respect the decisions of their judges, they have too much respect for their own common sense to believe, when a Church votes, by a large majority to withdraw from a Parish, and by a large majority does withdraw, that still it *leaves itself behind!*'

* This shows clearly how the Council regarded the church standing of these members.

† See Appendix, Note A. p. 51.

may be decided on even higher authority, than that of being the majority. The First Church, gathered 1634, was a Trinitarian and Calvinistic Church. None will dispute this. It was Trinitarian and Calvinistic also, in 1710–'11, when our present covenant was originally adopted, and again in 1825, when that same covenant was renewed, word for word, by a fair majority, as will be shown in its place. This same Church has stood on the same ancient foundation from that time to the present. We are, therefore, *ecclesiastically*, the only legitimate First Church in Scituate. The propriety of this conclusion from the above premises, will be further evident from the following testimony and considerations.

Rev. Dr. Priestley, a distinguished Unitarian writer, says, 'I do not wonder that you Calvinists entertain and express a strongly unfavorably opinion of us, Unitarians. The truth is, there neither can nor ought to be any compromise between us. If you are right, we are not Christians at all; and if we are right, you are gross idolators.' Rev. Mr. Belsham, another Unitarian writer, says, 'Opinions such as these can no more harmonize with each other than light and darkness, than Christ and Belial. They who hold doctrines so diametrically opposite cannot be fellow-worshippers in the same temple.' These writers are your own advocates, and to their opinions, as above quoted, we assent. Every intelligent Orthodox man, whether Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, German or Dutch Reformed, as well as my own denomination,* believe that the *reception* or *rejection* of such doctrines, as *native and total depravity, instantaneous regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ, as the only atonement for sin, the Supreme Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the doctrine of the Trinity, and the absolute eternity of future punishment, constitute a contrast in Christian doctrine and church standing*, as great as the above writers imply. That Unitarians reject all these doctrines, with, perhaps, the exception of the last mentioned, I can show from their own authorized publications, as well as from the lips of your own religious 'instructor,' before competent witnesses.†

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* The above denominations probably include more than nineteen twentieths of all the members of Protestant churches in the United States.

† 'This may certify, that we, the undersigned, being present at the house of Capt. Henry Damon July 28, 1843, and hearing the conversation between Rev. Edmond Q. Sewall and Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr., on the doctrines above mentioned, can testify that we heard the Rev. E. Q. Sewall distinctly avow his disbelief in all those doctrines except the last, which relates to future punishment, and which he did not believe or disbelieve, being as he thought *not revealed*.' (Signed,)

Scituate, December, 1844.' ‡ HENRY DAMON, 2d,
ORANGE LITCHFIELD.

‡ See also Appendix, Note B. p. 52.

The last doctrine above mentioned is rejected by many Unitarian writers, if not generally, and, as you probably know, is, at least, not believed by your own 'instructor.' Now, if the original Church, gathered in Scituate, 1634, was Trinitarian, and embraced all the above-named doctrines, as can be clearly shown; if that same Church adopted our present covenant in 1710–'11, and renewed it in 1825, and if that same Church — the majority, or even a minority only, had still abode by the original Faith and Covenant, must not that body be regarded as the regular successors and legitimate First Church, ecclesiastically? But doubly so, when we remember that the majority of the Church renewed the old covenant in 1825, and still abide substantially in the faith of the same great and fundamental doctrines.* We can thus clearly trace our regular history as a Trinitarian Church, from the present back to 1634. But I would inquire, how far back you can trace your history as a Unitarian Church, which is something 'so diametrically opposite' to ours?† Dear Sir, I must close this part of my reply by saying, that your view of Mr. Thomas's dismission, with your own acknowledgments, appears exceedingly 'strange' to me.

I proceed to your next subject of remark, relative to civil, ecclesiastical, and moral law. 'Here,' you say, 'are things asserted and implied, to which' you 'cannot agree,' namely, 'That the civil law is in opposition to the law of God, and that the ecclesiastical laws are the laws of God. To this' you 'cannot assent.' Why not? This language, as well as my own, only implies that there are some portions of the civil law in opposition to the law of God, and likewise some portions of ecclesiastical law, agreeable to his will. Can this be doubted? Or are the civil laws all so perfect, and the ecclesiastical so corrupt, that you cannot assent to so broad a statement as this? But from what follows, I perceive you assume the ground that civil law is every thing — the highest and only practical authority, and that the ecclesiastical is nothing — may be trampled under foot as 'unauthorized,' and 'not entitled to the least consideration.' Were you the only person for whom I may be writing, I might at once lay down my pen; as of what use is it to argue with one who denies the very first principles relative to the subject in hand. In your mind, the word 'Church' seems to have

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* By comparing in opposite columns our present Confession of Faith, with the 'Confession, owned and consented to, by the elders and messengers of the Churches assembled at Boston, in New England, May 12, 1680,' I find every essential idea in our articles, not only implied, but fully expressed in theirs. This Confession is very particular and full, covering more than twenty octavo pages.

† It is perfectly evident, that it cannot be traced back any farther than April 29, 1825. But its origin and foundation, I leave others to trace.

no corresponding idea. It is talked of, indeed, but often so mingled up with Society, or Parish, as to lose all separate existence and become a perfect nonentity. The only apology I can find (it is no excuse) for such sentiments and confusion, is in the fact, that you are not, as I understand, a member of any church, and I am sorry to add, seem to be one of those described in 1 Cor. 2: 14. But as the main points at issue are introduced in your letters, I will endeavor to give them a fair examination.

To an intelligent mind, all you bring forward to illustrate your position in regard to civil and ecclesiastical law, especially the case of Massasoit's grandson,* the Salem witchcraft, and laws enacted (if you suppose 'the Blue laws' were ever 'gravely enacted') against making mince pies and kissing babies on certain days, has not the least connection with the subject. We all know, and ought more frequently to remember, that the will of God, as interpreted both by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, is too often misunderstood. But this fact ought not to lead us to the rash conclusion, that we can know nothing about either State or Church, or that the civil authority only is infallible, while the ecclesiastical is unworthy of the 'least consideration.' Did your course of remark, however, (I will not call it reasoning,) bear at all on the subject, tending to weaken our confidence in ecclesiastical laws, it must have a similar influence against all civil laws; for we learn from your own pen, that it was the civil, not the ecclesiastical authorities, which hung all the witches, and inflicted all the penalties, of which you speak. Or do you say ministers then had great power in state as well as church, perhaps it might be questioned, whether they have not still some influence there, and whether it may not have been even principally through that influence our civil laws have been improved in some of the most desirable respects, while a far different class of men may have caused them in other respects to degenerate. I might mention some of these, did time or the merits of the question at issue demand.

But although your illustrations do not bear in the least on the question, I must not suffer some of your statements to pass without saying a word to counteract the natural impression they would make, should they meet the public eye, as I am confident that impression would be *false*, if that be not the fact in regard to some of the statements themselves. Your intimacy in spirit, as well as friendship, with Rev. Mr. Deane, seems, alas! too apparent. You employ great sophistry, if nothing worse, especially in the case of Massasoit's grandson. History informs us, that this lad was not only the grandson of Massasoit, 'the Indian prince, who received the Pilgrims with open arms — was

* Or rather *great*-grandson.

always their friend in need,' &c., but that he was also the son of king Philip, that Indian warrior, who excited the New England tribes, and those as far south, it was supposed, as Virginia, to unite in cutting off, if possible, the whole English colony, then in its infancy. You doubtless recollect 'his first attack upon the English at Swansey, as they were returning from public worship'—how also he 'marked his route with the burning of houses and the scalping of the defenceless inhabitants'—the fate of those 'seventy or eighty young men, the flower of Essex county' at Bloody Brook—how 'peculiarly disastrous to Scituate,' also* and the numerous other towns laid in ashes, beside the brave captains and others, who fell in those melancholy times, some by the most frightful tortures. Says the historian, 'Twelve or thirteen towns were destroyed; the disbursements and losses equalled in value half a million of dollars—an enormous sum for the few of that day. More than six hundred men, chiefly young men, the flower of the country, of whom the mother might have been proud, perished in the field. As many as six hundred houses were burned—there was scarcely a family from which death had not selected his victim.'† 'Every eleventh family was houseless, and every eleventh soldier had sunk to his grave.'‡ It was during this struggle of the English, as it were for existence, that Philip's son, with some one hundred and thirty or more Indian warriors 'fell' prisoners 'into the hands of our ancestors.' It was under these circumstances that the 'innocent boy,' of whom you speak, was captured, and it was truly a question, whether these prisoners should be released or executed, while those at liberty continued to burn and kill, and it were still doubtful what would be the result. Says Hutchinson,§ 'The cruelties which had been exercised upon the English were urged in excuse for the treatment which the Indians received, who were made prisoners, or surrendered themselves.' 'A great many, therefore, of the chiefs were executed in Boston and Plymouth, and most of the rest were sold and shipped off for slaves to Bermudas and other parts.' But did the ministers do all this? Did they even advise to send any, or especially this lad, into 'hopeless slavery?' I do not find it so recorded. They were, indeed, called upon to express their opinion, and, such as it was, I will state in their own language. To this inquiry, 'The Rev. Mr. Cotton, of Plymouth, and the Rev. Mr. Arnold, of Marshfield, gave the following answer:'

'The question being proposed to us by our honored rulers, whether Philip's son be a child of death, our answer hereunto

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* See Deane's 'History,' p. 120–128.
† See Bancroft, vol. ii. p. 109.
‡ See Goodrich.
§ Hist. of Mass., vol. i. p. 307.

is, that we do acknowledge that rule, Deut. 24: 16, to be moral, and therefore perpetually binding; namely, that in a particular act of wickedness, though capital, the crime of the parent doth not render his child a subject of punishment by the civil magistrate; yet, upon serious consideration, we humbly conceive that the children of notorious traitors, rebels, and murderers, especially of such as have been principal leaders and actors in such horrid villanies, and that against a whole nation, yea, the whole Israel of God, may be involved in the guilt of their parents, and may *salva republica* [that is, for the public safety,] be adjudged to death, as to us seems evident by the Scripture instances of Saul, Achan, Haman, the children of whom were cut off by the sword of justice, for the transgression of their parents, although concerning some of those children, it be manifest that they were not capable of being actors therein.

(Signed) SAMUEL ARNOLD,
JOHN COTTON.'*

Here is nothing said about sending into slavery, or indeed whether Philip's son should be executed at all. They laid down a general principle, as they understood it, and then left the civil authorities to apply it if approved, wherever they thought proper. They did not, however, follow 'their decision,' even if they supposed Philip's son one of those 'involved in the guilt of their parents;' for 'their decision' was, that such may be adjudged to death,' not 'sold to hopeless slavery.'

The 'Rev. Mr. Keith, of Bridgewater, gave a more benignant interpretation.' He says, after referring to several texts of Scripture, for his more lenient reply in respect to this boy; 'I hope God will direct those whom it doth concern to a good issue. Let us join our prayers at the throne of grace, with all our might, that the Lord would so dispose of all public motions and affairs, that his Jerusalem in this wilderness, may be the habitation of justice, and the mountain of holiness.'† I can find no authority more to your purpose, than the above, and surely such serious, candid, and respectful replies do not look so much like the cruel 'domineering spirit,' as like the true Christian. 'The progress in knowledge,' of which you so often speak, as well as the Christian spirit exhibited, I fear is not quite so flattering as you seem to suppose. They had some kind and Christian feeling, and probably a little knowledge, even in those early times, as will appear in the sequel.

I might here refer to the early efforts of our ancestors to enlighten and Christianize the Indians, showing a very different

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* See Appendix to Morton's 'New England Memorial,' Judge Davis's edition, pp. 453, 454.

† Id. p. 455.

spirit cherished by many, especially of the clergy, from that which you seem to prefer to charge upon them, but will desist with the following brief quotations from Governor Everett on this point. He says, 'Our fathers regarded the aboriginal inhabitants as heathen. They bestowed unwearied pains to Christianize them, and with much greater success than is generally supposed.'* 'Since the death of the apostle Paul, a nobler, truer, and warmer spirit, than John Eliot, never lived.'† I need not add more, to set the case of Massasoit's grandson, and the spirit of Christian ministers of that day, in the true and proper light, or to wield your own weapon against yourself.

It will be equally easy to overturn your witchcraft illustration. I admit the delusion, but it was the fault of the age rather than of particular men,‡ like the delusions of our own times, in regard to ardent spirit, American slavery, Millerism, and war, all which we hope are soon to pass away. It might also be questioned, whether there is not as much in reason and Scripture to support the theory of witchcraft,§ as that of Mesmerism, (familiarly called Animal Magnetism,) at least, in some of its forms. Still we know, that after all this 'progress in knowledge,' in these 'enlightened times,' and even in 'our University,' has this latter (shall I not call it delusion?) been admitted her halls for exhibition. And may it not be possible for some future historian to make out quite as true and affecting a story of more recent events, touching intemperance, slavery, or war, in which warm, if not 'cold-blooded murders' occur by thousands instead of tens,‖ as you have done in the case of Massasoit's grandson, or the Salem witchcraft?

Laws had existed in England, making witchcraft a capital crime before the influence of the Puritans arose,¶ and executions had occurred in various parts of the mother country, by the decisions (among others) of Sir Matthew Hale, one of the brightest ornaments of the English bench.** Says Bancroft, 'in the years in which Scotland sacrificed hecatombs to the delusion

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* Orations, p. 591. † Id. p. 614.

‡ 'In New England, at the time of Cotton Mather, the belief in witchcraft may be said to have been universal.'—*Prof. Pond.*

§ See Ex. 22: 18. Deut. 18: 10, 11. 1 Sam. 28: 7–20.

‖ My correspondent says, 'some *forty* or *fifty*.'

¶ See, also, note second, on page 14. 'The Puritans first made their appearance during the reign of Queen Mary,' 1553 to 1558.—*Worcester.*

** 'At those trials, Sir Thomas Brown attended as a witness, who "declared his opinion in favor of the reality of witchcraft, and entered into a particular discussion of the subject before the jury."' In the 17th century, '"more than two hundred were hanged in England, thousands were burned in Scotland, and large numbers perished in various parts of Europe," for the supposed crime of witchcraft.'—*Prof. Pond.*

[witchcraft], there were *three* victims in New England,' and it would seem only three.* Like numerous other laws from the English code, that respecting witchcraft was enrolled on the statute-book here. If ministers, as well as physicians, justices, legislators, and judges,† approved this law for a time, *they* were evidently sincere in it, as the Rev. George Burroughs, minister of Salem, and a considerable number of professors of religion were executed among others, though I know not as any judge or justice suffered in a similar manner. Ministers, I believe, rejoiced equally, at least, with others in the removal of the evil. But evidently, men who could converse with supposed witches in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Indian languages,‡ and lay the foundation of such a republic and institutions, as we find the Puritans did lay, were no fools or knaves.

Says a late governor of Connecticut, in a recent letter to Prof. Pond, respecting his little book, entitled the 'Mather Family,' 'The dispassionate, luminous, and effectual manner in which you have refuted the malignant aspersions attempted to be cast on the fair name of Increase and Cotton Mather, richly merit the applause of all virtuous and honorable men.' || Our Pilgrim fathers had their foibles and errors, no doubt, as most others, but we shall have to go far and search long for such another band of men as first settled these New England shores, whether we regard their learning, talent, resolution, or ardent piety. You know their civil compact before they left the 'Mayflower' — you know the system of common schools they devised and adopted — you know also by whom and for what purposes chiefly, our more than one hundred colleges have been established, and who still generally preside over them. Nor will you probably call in question the following testimony of Unitarian writers. §

Says Bancroft, 'The Puritans established a government in America, such as the laws of natural justice warranted.' 'Calvinism overthrew priestcraft; saw in goodness, infinite joy; in evil, infinite woe; and recognizing no other abiding distinctions, opposed, secretly, but surely, hereditary monarchy, aristocracy, and bondage. Puritanism exalted the *laity* — was religion struggling for the people. The effects of Puritanism display its true character still more distinctly. Ecclesiastical tyranny is of all kinds the worst; its fruits are cowardice, idleness, ignorance, and poverty: Puritanism was a life-giving spirit; activity, thrift, intelligence followed in its train; and as for courage, a coward

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* Vol. i. p. 465.

† 'Particularly Chief Justice Stoughton.'—*Prof. Pond.*

‡ As Cotton Mather did. (*Magnalia*, vol. ii. p. 402.)

|| See 'Boston Recorder,' Oct. 3, 1844.

§ Chiefly Unitarian.

and a Puritan never went together. The Puritans of New England are parents of one third the whole white population of the United States.'*

Says Rev. Alexander Young, 'It has been the practice of the Independent or Congregational clergy, both in Old and New England, from the earliest times, to take an interest and part in public affairs. The prominent and efficient agency, which they exercised in the infancy of our colonial settlements is well known: Cotton, Hooker, and Davenport, shared at least an equal power with Winthrop, Haynes, and Eaton, in moulding the civil polity of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The services of Increase Mather in obtaining the second Charter of Massachusetts are recorded in her history; and the patriotic exertions of Mayhew, Chauncy, and Cooper, before and during the revolutionary war, will never be forgotten. The Congregational clergy were found, at that time, almost to a man, on the side of their country's independence; and they have ever been the earnest and consistent advocates of liberty with order.'†

Says Worcester, in his 'Elements of History,' 'Hume acknowledges the services of the Puritans, "by whom alone," according to him, "the precious spark of *liberty* had been kindled and was preserved; and to whom the English owe the whole freedom of their Constitution."' 'They were strenuous advocates for freedom in the State, and a more thorough reform in religion.'‡

Says President Dwight, of Yale College, 'Plymouth was the first town built in New England by civilized men; and those by whom it was built were inferior in worth to no body of men, whose names are recorded in history, during the last seventeen hundred years.'§ The poet also thus eulogizes these men:

> 'These are the iron men, that broke
> Ground, where the Indian's war-fire curled;
> These spurned the princely, priestly yoke,
> These are the fathers of the world.' — TAPPAN.

The above quotations show how applicable your charge of 'king-craft and priest-craft' is upon the New England clergy. If you had known the first principles of Congregationalism, you would have known that this system, as derived from the New Testament, knows no priest, except the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest. That the clergy, in general, have not much departed from their former high standing, may be seen, in part, from the testimony of as great a mind, probably, as this

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* See vol. i. pp. 460, 461, 462, 463, 467; vol. ii. 461.

† 'Chronicles of Pilgrims,' p. 37.

‡ See pp. 199, and 205, 206; also 241.

§ Quoted in Young's 'Chronicles of Pilgrims,' p. 161.

land ever produced. Please read the fourteenth and fifteenth pages of Daniel Webster's speech on Girard's will, delivered last February, for this proof. *

But I pass to another point in the discussion, — the morality of the question. This I regard as a very important point. But you say, 'I considered your claims of being the First Church, of little consequence.' Again, 'I say nothing of the moral law, for I can see no possible way it can have any bearing on the number of your Church.' Still further, 'No legislature in Massachusetts would dare enact laws to clash with the Divine laws.' And, again, 'I cannot believe the people of Massachusetts would permit a law, manifestly contrary to the laws of God, to stand on their statute-books an instant.' But you believe such laws have stood there, as in the case of witchcraft and kissing babies, &c.; and is it not possible the statute-book may not yet be quite purged? This may appear more evident as we proceed.

You seem, Dear Sir, most carefully to avoid any allusion (except in one brief hint, near your close,) to the fact, that our Trinitarian ancestors left property to the amount of some thousands of dollars, to this First Church, and the Society connected with it, for the support of their religion, which, we have seen, is something 'so diametrically opposite' to Unitarianism. This fund was left principally, if not entirely, near a century before Calvinism lost the ascendency in the town, (it is doubtful whether it ever fairly lost that ascendency in the Church, as will be seen more fully hereafter,) which you say, approvingly, Rev. Mr. Deane fixes at 'about 1750.' † Now this fund, '*you* know, *I* know, and *all* know, as well as we can from common information' and common sense, has been *grossly perverted.* And is there no morality, or rather *im*morality in this? As I have been repeatedly informed, (and the sentiment is *true*, whether ever spoken or not,) one of your own Society, a Universalist, once rose in Parish meeting, and spoke something as follows, in respect to this fund: —

'Gentlemen, you all know *this fund justly belongs to the Orthodox*, but, by uniting our strength, we outvoted them (virtually) in the Parish, and took it from them; and now the Universalist party have the same right to take this fund, by the same means, if in our power, from the Unitarian party, as we all had formerly in taking it from the Orthodox.' The whole community may see the propriety and force of this short speech, and you well know the long struggle, that has been carried on for years, between the two parties in your own Society, till endurance was no longer supportable, when many of the oppressed party, last spring, leaped from your embrace.

But to return. I say you carefully avoid all allusion to this fund, with as much skill, and, if I may judge from the com-

* See Appendix, Note C. p. 56. † See Appendix, Note D. p. 57.

motion developed in some minds, your community would make a similar ado under the agitation of this question, as our more southern brethren, — the slaveholders, — do, when the morality of the slavery question is discussed. They plead the civil, and often the divine law in support of their claims to the slave. But it is doubted whether you will openly dare go as far in support of your claims to our funds. I know the civil law, and especially as interpreted by Unitarian judges,* decides in your favor, — a decision, however, I doubt not, destined to pass into the same kind of a memorial, as the Salem witchcraft, which you say 'will always be a stain on the fair name of Massachusetts.' I think, Sir, you, and your more intelligent associates, will not presume to advocate before this 'enlightened age,' the direct morality of such self-evident perversion of funds, — such legalized unrighteousness. It was prudent, therefore, in you, to keep as clear of the moral law as possible. Sir, it has been a matter of rejoicing to our Orthodox churches, that the 'cord between church and state' *was* 'severed years ago,' and it is their only regret, that it was not 'severed' a few years sooner. It would have saved in their possession some hundreds of thousands, now appropriated to the most destructive influence.† And if the time has come, when the counsels of divines and 'their misdeeds and failures, in any respect, may be talked of, and even judged of, in charity, without transgressing the divine laws,' has it not also come, when we may talk and judge, in a similar manner, of the civil law, and of justices and judges even, with their 'misdeeds and failures?' Those ancestors who left our funds for the support of their religion, had, doubtless, as little sympathy with the peculiar doctrines of Unitarians, as the present Trinitarian Church in Scituate, and would probably have left a fund for their support about as soon. ‡ Now is there no morality, or rather *im*morality in

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* It is apprehended, that the statute itself may be correct, and that the 'mistake' has been only, or chiefly, in the judicial decisions. 'The courts' [in England] 'decided some years since, that, according to law, the Unitarians had no valid claim to them,' [namely, the *funds* left by the 'Orthodox Dissenters.']

† 'A large amount of parsonage lands and other ministerial funds, in this State, is now evidently in a *perverted* condition. What was religiously set apart in the beginning by Orthodox Congregational Churches and Parishes, for the support of the Gospel ministry, as they understood it and still understand it, is now sacrilegiously applied to the maintenance of Unitarian and Universalist preachers. Some *twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars* of Orthodox funds have been thus held in a state of legalized perversion, for the last ten years, in the single town of Haverhill.'—*N. E. Puritan*, Jan. 31, 1845.

‡ The following extracts, from an English Unitarian writer, in their 'Monthly Repository,' will, of course, give an impartial glance at the condition of Unitarianism, in England, a few years since. This writer says: 'Many of the old chapels amongst us, are in a pitiable state. Of our own knowledge, we can speak of some scores, that scarcely show signs of life.

snatching the children's bread, left by their fathers, and giving it to strangers? Giving it, — no, not the bread, — if it were, we would scarce open our lips, though we begged, as we have, indeed, virtually, from door to door; * but that bread is changed, as we believe, to another substance, — another gospel, wholly incapable of saving a single soul, through its direct instrumentality. How can true 'righteousness' be 'the central principle' in such a system? †

But we are not alone, — numerous other churches in this commonwealth are similarly situated. I will cite a few instances, to show the defect in our civil law. ‡ Take the town of Reading, where a similar secession took place, in the spring of 1834. They had built a new and convenient house of worship, with vestry, belfry, &c., in 1829, at an expense of about four thousand dollars. The church numbered from sixty to seventy members. The separation took place when all the voters in town belonged to the first parish, unless they had joined some other. When the question was tried, it was decided by those who seldom if ever worshipped in this house, to turn this church out of doors. About one half the voters on the occasion were strangers, called in for this virtuous object. The church and some others retired, when it appeared, that those compelled in conscience to leave their new house, owned about one half of all the pews, while those who remained to enjoy it, owned only three or four, the remainder being unsold. Now the civil law authorized all this, § yea, and more. The church must give up their plate and Records! But to whom? Committees were appointed on both sides, one to give up, and the other to receive the treasure. They met for the

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The number of hearers in them will not average more than thirty, — the salary of the minister, not more than £70 per annum.' 'One half of the insignificant stipends paid to ministers, proceeds from the charity of preceding ages,' [that is, 'from the endowments of the old Orthodox Presbyterians, of which the Unitarians have obtained possession.'] *Monthly Rep.* Nov. 1829. 'The whole number of Unitarian chapels, on the Island [about A. D. 1830] is as follows: In England, 206; Wales, 14; Scotland, 3, — total, 223. Of these 223 places of worship, 178 — four fifths of the whole — were originally Orthodox. Of the 206, in England, only 36 were built by Unitarians.' (*Sp. of Pil.* vol. 4, p. 37.) 'No less than £120 are annually appropriated from' [the Orthodox] 'Lady Hewley's funds, to the education of young men, for the very purpose of denying and endeavoring to extinguish a belief in those doctrines, in the faith of which Lady Hewley died, and to the dissemination of which she designed her property should be devoted when she was no more.' (*Quotation from an English writer, in 'Spirit of the Pilgrims,'* vol. 4, pp. 41, 42.)

* This Society receives aid, annually, from the Mass. H. M. Society.

† A tract, recently put into my hands, is entitled, 'Righteousness the Central Principle of Christianity, and the true Basis of the Unitarian Denomination!'

‡ As now interpreted. § As interpreted by Unitarian judges.

purpose. The *ecclesiastical* first church required of the *civil* first church to show their authority. They had the property in their possession, and felt under obligation to deposit it in lawful hands. The civil committee could not then show their authority. Hence they were compelled to adjourn. On the second meeting, their authority was accepted and the business transacted. But what was this authority of the committee from the civil first church? The minister, being one of the committee, stated that a church meeting was regularly notified, both from the pulpit and by written notice posted. He was present at the church meeting, and three women, (two of whom had been excommunicated, and the other was under church discipline.) The minister himself had never been baptized, or joined any church whatever, as he acknowledged on the occasion. These three women, at this time, and under these circumstances, composed the entire *civil* first church, all the males and the other females having retired with those disposed, and built another house, near by, such as they were able. But these three women proceeded to choose this minister and two other men from the parish, to act as this committee.* Since the separation, the *civil* first church have kept their house open only a part of the time, — last winter about one third of the Sabbaths, and then often only to hear a sermon read!

Take another case, — the wealthy town of Framingham. Here was a large and flourishing church, — their silver plate alone was valued at several hundred dollars, — the avails of church collections at the sacrament. Here only one woman, as I am credibly informed, remained to constitute the *civil* first church,† and receive the plate, Records, &c. The separation took place under the same law, I believe, as that at Reading. In this case, the plate was not demanded. It was not, however, because the civil law‡ was not in their favor, but the injustice was too glaring! I have these facts from the most credible authority, though, in the latter case, I am not able to be very full. Numerous other similar instances might be collected, were it necessary, as Old Cambridge, Dedham, Bedford, Malden, &c., &c.

Now I ask for the morality of all this. Need we go to the Bible, or even to a 'lawyer,' to decide whether such things are right? Surely, good 'plain, common sense is sufficient.' What encouragement to the benevolent to leave funds for any charitable object whatever, if such perversions may be allowed and justified? But I sincerely believe the time will soon come, when such laws and decisions will be corrected. Such 'laws of the land' will not always 'remain.' While they do, however, I will

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* See note three, on page 64.

† '*One* person is a complete subject of baptism; but one person is incapable of being a church.' — *Camb. Plat.* chap. 4, sec. 5.

‡ As before interpreted.

endeavor to submit, as a 'worthy citizen,' and 'Christian minister.' I revere the laws and authority of old Massachusetts; as one of her native sons, I love her name and institutions well, and shall cherish none other than the best wishes for her highest civil and ecclesiastical welfare. (Nor shall I attempt to bring our early and most worthy ancestors into such unjust and dark repute, as some have vainly striven to do.) Such views and feelings, however, are in perfect harmony with a free expression of opinion in regard to any of her 'misdeeds and failures.'

I could cite other instances, in which I believe the laws of Massachusetts are evidently wrong, were it necessary. There have been several articles of some length in the 'Boston Recorder' a few weeks past, headed 'Sunday contracts, — the law wrong in Massachusetts.' The statute-book contains also, among several similar articles, for which the offender may 'be sentenced to death, by a general court-martial,' the following: —

'Any officer or soldier who shall desert.'

'Any officer or soldier who shall knowingly harbor or protect an enemy, or relieve them with money, victuals, or ammunition.'* But the New Testament teaches, expressly, '*Love* your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you.† 'If thine *enemy* hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink,' ‡ &c. Yet you say, 'No legislature in Massachusetts would dare enact laws to clash with the Divine laws.' 'I cannot believe the people of Massachusetts would permit a law, *manifestly* contrary to the laws of God, to stand on their statute-book an instant.' Read the above to a mere child, and he would tell you, there was 'manifest clashing.'

In passing, I will notice that the word 'formal' should have been enclosed in brackets instead of the parenthesis.

I have now a word to add, in review of what you say, touching the 'false statements, made in the history of the town.' First, in regard to the covenant itself. This, I say, and you admit, was adopted March 12, 1710–11. But you say, 'This will hardly answer' my 'purpose.' 'Until some time after they "became desirous of introducing a covenant," they had no knowledge of the existence of any such thing.' *Who* had no knowledge of this? Not, surely, those who adopted the covenant, in 1710–11. Not Dea. Israel Litchfield, who joined this church in July, 1776; nor Mr. Eleazar Peakes, who testifies (and *you* know his memory is as good as a *written* document) that Dea. Litchfield told him of this covenant on the 'Records,' and of having examined it about that time (1776). If you now turn to page 13 of our 'Manual,' you will find four of the survivors, (including the last mentioned,)

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* Revised Statutes, Part I, Tit. 4, chap. 12, sec. 138, arts. 3 and 9.

† Matt. 5: 44. ‡ Rom. 12: 20.

who belonged to the Church before the separation, testifying as follows: '*Knowing* that the First Church in Scituate, — the dear Church of their Puritan fathers, — was originally evangelical, and still had a church-covenant, fully Trinitarian and evangelical, on their church-records,' &c. Dea. Howard White, another survivor, and one of the minority on our list, now a member of the Baptist church, testifies to the same fact. I know not how many others could testify, were it necessary to produce them. Pardon me, then, if I say, how 'preposterous, and even ridiculous,' for one who belongs to no church, and seems scarcely to have any true idea of what the name signifies, to charge upon 'good, pious, honest men,' acknowledged to be such, the *most deliberate falsehood*, respecting their sacred covenant! How can you, or the world in general, *know* all the vows and obligations Christians take upon themselves, or how extensive their knowledge respecting these things?* But it is not very strange, with such a Pastor as it appears was then set over the flock, that many out of the Church, and, perhaps, not a few even in the Church, 'had no knowledge of the existence of any such thing.' That there was evil, and a very 'loose state of things in this Church,' at that time, cannot be doubted. Nor is it much to the credit of the 'liberal' party, that 'when the Orthodox man, after various arguments in the case, said, "We must have a church meeting," that 'the liberal man' replied, 'Have it, then, — I shall not go near you.' This, truly, sets the subject in not a very favorable light. The 'Records' state, that the request to the Pastor, (dated Nov. 20, 1824,) 'To appoint a meeting of the Church. on Thursday, the 25th of November instant, at one o'clock, P. M.,' was 'signed by a *large majority* of the Church.'

But to return to the covenant. You quote me as using the phrase, 'loose state with respect to *their* covenant,' and then add, 'that is, they knew of no covenant, and wanted one.' What is the meaning of the pronoun 'their?' Does it not denote possession? Thus in two very short sentences intimately connected, you acknowledge and then flatly *deny* the very same thing! You seem, indeed, here driven to the greatest straits to keep up a *show* of argument. Take your comment on the words 'found' and 'renew,' as specimens of your reasoning. Can I not '*find*' a passage in history, or in the Bible, which I *knew of*, and was familiar with before? But you say, 'it would not have been a thing "found," had they known of it before.' So of the word 'renew.' Had you consulted a common dictionary, or known the familiar language of almost every Christian, you would not have written in this trifling way. Christians speak almost daily of

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* My correspondent seems to have a kind of omniscience, in respect to some things. See also note, on page 21.

renewing their covenant vows, and especially at communion seasons.

But take another, and perhaps the only proper view of this subject. Says Webster, a 'covenant is a mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing. — In church affairs, a solemn agreement between the members of a church, that they will walk together according to the precepts of the gospel, in brotherly affection.'* Such a covenant was adopted 1710-11, by the First Church in Scituate. *When* was it laid aside by the Church? At what meeting? All power in a Congregational church rests with the majority, not with the pastor. Did this Church ever repeal their 'solemn agreement?' Where and when was the vote recorded? You, who have access to our 'Records,' can tell. If not, then does the old covenant stand in force, and all who enter the Church, not knowing the foundation on which they stand, greatly err. A church covenant may

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* 'The word church' [in Greek, ἐκκλησια, from ἐκ, "out of," and καλεω, "to call,"] properly means those who are *called out*, and is applied to Christians, as being called out, or separated from the world. [See John 15: 18, 19] It means, sometimes, the whole body of believers; as Eph. 1: 22; 1 Cor. 10: 32. It means, also, a particular society of believers, worshipping in one place; as Acts 8: 1; 9: 31; 1 Cor. 1: 2, &c.' 'In common language, it means the Church *visible*, — that is, all who profess religion; or *invisible*, — that is, all who are real Christians, professors or not.' 'It is used in classic writers, to denote an *assembly* of any kind, and is twice thus used in the New Testament. Acts 19: 39, 41.' (*Barnes.*) 'A *Congregational* church is, by the institution of Christ, a part of the militant visible church, consisting of a company of saints by calling, united into one body by an holy covenant, for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification of one another in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus.' (*Camb. Plat.* chap. 2, sec. 6.) 'Saints by calling must have a visible political union among themselves, or else they are not yet a particular church.' 'This form is the visible covenant, agreement or consent, whereby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the church covenant; for we see not otherwise how members can have church power over one another mutually.' (*Camb. Plat.* chap. 4, secs. 1 and 3.) Says Dr. Emmons, 'How did they [the Apostles] form churches? and how are churches now to be formed? or what is it, that constitutes a number of visible saints a proper church? I answer a mutual covenant. It is by confederation that a number of individual Christians become a visible church of Christ. A number of professing Christians cannot be formed into a church, without their freely and mutually covenanting to walk together in all the duties and ordinances of the gospel. They may be real and visible saints, while they remain unconnected and separate; but they cannot be a proper church, without entering into covenant, and laying themselves under certain obligations to each other, to live and act like Christians. A number of Christians merely living in the same city, town, or parish, does not make them a church. Nor do they become a church by usually meeting together for social or public worship. Nor does baptism constitute a person a member of any particular church. Nothing besides a covenant can give *form* to a church, or be a sufficient bond of union.' (*Works*, vol. 5, pages 445, 446.)

in some respects be compared to a constitution of government, which stands in force till repealed, whether all the subjects of that government are acquainted with it or not. But it is evident this Church, or at least, the more intelligent part of it, did know to some extent their foundation, though in a 'loose state.' They speak of this covenant, as that 'on which this Church *has* stood for more than a century.' (The 'Records' say '*has* stood,' which was changed to '*had* stood' in the 'Manual,' (p. 7,) to harmonize with another past tense.) Moreover, the 'Records' inform us, that at the Church-meeting, held December 25, 1824, 'Rev. Mr. Thomas proposed that a committee of three be chosen to assist him to attend to revise or amend the old covenant, and lay the same before the Church, as soon as is convenient, for their approbation. Paul Merritt, Eleazar Peakes, and Levi Vinal, were chosen for the above purpose.' But it appears, that at the next meeting, regularly notified, the Church renewed the old covenant instead of one revised or amended from it. Hence we learn from the history, as well as from living witnesses, and the nature of the covenant, that the First Church in Scituate were then (in 1824) standing on the old covenant. I say, then, that Mr. Deane's language plainly and naturally conveys a false idea to the candid reader, and hence his statement must be regarded as 'false.' And this, as you imply, if false, he 'must have made knowingly,' as many others also believe.

Again, you reply to my inquiry, whether 'the facts, the Bible, and common sense' do not decide, that we are 'not only the First Trinitarian Church of Christ in Scituate, but the First Church in Scituate,' as follows: First, in respect to 'the facts.' 'No, they seceded and formed a new Society.' This is a very summary answer, truly; but nothing to do with the point at issue, as before abundantly shown. In your view, however, if the fact had been, that every member of the Church had seceded, the *First* Church, (though *no* church) had still remained!! Again you inquire, does 'the Bible' decide in our favor? Here you ask, 'In what chapter and verse is it recorded, that your Church is the First Church in Scituate?' A question in part, very much like that put by an ancient ruler, (John 3: 4.) But you will find the principles laid down in Acts 6: 1–6 and 15: 1–32, and elsewhere in the New Testament.* Congregationalism, as to church order and government, is believed to be derived from 'the Bible.' That majorities settled questions, as to church officers and discipline, is evident from the passages above referred to, *choosing* evidently implies this.† But one important consideration further.

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* See also Matt. 18: 15–17. Acts 1: 15, 23–26. 14: 23. 1 Cor. 5: 1–13 2. Cor. 2: 6, &c.

† Says Mosheim, 'The power of enacting laws,' [in the primitive churches,] 'of appointing teachers and ministers, and of determining controversies,

We read in the New Testament much about 'churches,' as 'the church at Jerusalem' — 'at Corinth,' 'Ephesus,' 'Antioch,' &c., &c., but nothing of parishes, or civil societies, as connected with them and controlling them. Individuals were, indeed, somewhat controlled, when brought before governors and kings and imprisoned or beheaded; but I do not recollect of any parish, or even a governor, taking charge of the affairs of the churches, as such. The church and state were 'severed,' for a time, doubtless, even centuries 'ago.'

The facts appear to be simply these. The gospel, regarding all mankind, 'by nature the children of wrath,' and as 'dead in trespasses and sins,'* introduces a system of means (including the agency of the Holy Ghost) for their regeneration and salvation. As men are regenerated, or born again of the Spirit, they become members of Christ's spiritual church, of which he is the Head. He has made it the duty of such to unite also with his external or visible church.† for the purpose of the more orderly support of gospel worship, instruction, and ordinances. The New Testament teaches us that the early converts did thus associate. But as the gospel spread, and its temporal as well as spiritual blessings were perceived, many, not professedly regenerated, have been disposed to meet with the church and assist them in these objects. Rejoicing in this willingness, both from the hope that these individuals might thus become savingly acquainted with the gospel, and from its diminishing their own pecuniary expense, the church gladly welcomed their presence and aid. Hence the origin of religious societies and parishes. They are something added, not the original root. But, alas! occasionally, churches have *suffered* from such kindness. In our day, they have too often been treated by some of those societies, much as was the kind husbandman, who received to his bosom the cold and stiffened serpent. When a little warmed, he *bit his benefactor*. Now, dear Sir, look again into your Bible, and let its pure light assist you in reviewing your hasty decision. I need not add, to show the proper decision of 'common sense,' after such facts and the Bible have spoken.

Secondly. In regard to the majority. Mr. Deane says, 'but not having a majority of the Church,' &c. I ask, 'Is not this statement false?' and you reply, 'No;' and thus prove the adage, 'a man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still.' You come to this conclusion, by refusing to look at, or acknowl-

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was lodged in the people' [church members] 'at large; nor did the Apostles, although invested with divine authority, either resolve on, or sanction, any thing whatever, without the knowledge and concurrence of the general body of Christians, of which the church was composed.' — *Mosheim*, in *Carpenter*.'

* Eph. 2: 3, 1.

† See 'Church Manual,' p. 19, Disc.

edge one part of my proof, which I will now state a little more definitely. You admit the twelve, who acted in the dismission of Rev. Mr. Thomas, to be Trinitarians, though you take some exception at the moral character of one of them. Leaving him for the present, I wish to direct your particular notice to the other part of my proof, 'that several others of the minority, soon after withdrew and united with Trinitarian churches.' If you think this general statement not sufficient, I will be a little more definite, confirming it by the following testimony, gathered in part since I commenced this communication.

'This may certify, that I was present at the meeting of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, held February 6, 1825, and advocated and approved the renewal of the ancient covenant then adopted, my religious sentiments having been and still are fully Trinitarian and Calvinistic. (Signed,)

SCITUATE, October 2, 1844.' HOWARD WHITE.

'This may certify, that at the time of the renewal of the ancient covenant of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, February 6, 1825, my sentiments were decidedly Trinitarian and Calvinistic, and have been from that day to this, as well as for years previous to that event, and that I should have come off with the rest, had I not found it would have created difficulties, greater than I feared I could meet. (Signed,)

SCITUATE, October 2, 1844.' SIMEON VINAL.

The opinion of Mr. John Studley, (now deceased,) who came off soon after the separation, is well known as Trinitarian and Calvinistic. Mr. W. also states that he *approved* of the dismission of Mr. Thomas by the Church, and should have been present at that meeting and voted with the majority, had not some Providence prevented. We have then, at least, *fifteen* to *nine*, (including the Pastor,) in favor of the old covenant, or Trinitarians; quite a fair, and one would think, among people of common discernment, an indisputable majority. This is also in perfect harmony with the fact, that 'a large majority,' 'signed' the request for 'a church meeting,' and also, with your own acknowledgments, 'that the liberal part of the Church did not attend the Church-meetings. The Pastor, and perhaps some few others, attended a few of the first.' It is beautiful to see how all things harmonize, when we get into the path of truth.

We learn, also, from the above, that our 'majority, 12,' would have become 14 to 10, or rather 15 to 8, instead of 12 to 11, (the Pastor having no right to vote under such circumstances,) in the dismission of Rev. Mr. Thomas, had not peculiar circumstances prevented.*

* It may be proper here to state more definitely the nature of this majority. To the casual observer, it might appear that the vote, actually

A word now in respect to the objectionable character. How could *you*, dear Sir, thus disturb 'the ashes of the dead?' You say, he 'had paid no tax in the Parish, had not partaken the Sacrament with the Church, or been to meeting there but rarely if at all, for thirty or forty years,' &c. It is well known that one reason why he did not attend that meeting and sacrament was, that he did not approve the sentiments there advanced. He was constant in Rev. Mr. Grosvenor's ministry, and whenever Calvinistic candidates preached, (between the years '80 and '87,) till Mr. Dawes was settled. But during his ministry and that of his successor, he seldom attended meeting, except when occasional Calvinistic preaching was enjoyed in his neighborhood. Another reason, (perhaps occasioned by the loose preaching, and state of things at that day,) he became intemperate in his habits, no very uncommon sin in those days, for I am most credibly informed, that at least two of the small minority, for one in the majority were at least equally intemperate, sometimes coming even to the sacrament in a very improper state, and leaving it in a worse. This man had too much good sense and intelligence

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passed, April 29, 1825, by which Rev. Mr. Thomas was dismissed, was nearly, if not quite, *equal*, allowing a vote to Rev. Mr. Thomas. But it should be remembered, that after several of the first meetings, in which it was found, that a large majority of the Church were Trinitarians and dissatisfied with their Pastor, the few Unitarians, who upheld Mr. Thomas, refused generally to attend the church meetings. After the fair renewal of the old covenant, in February, the Pastor, and 'liberal part of the Church, did not attend the church meetings.' They were all *absent* from the meeting of his dismission, so that we may say with propriety, that THIS VOTE OF DISMISSION WAS UNANIMOUS. The Church were duly notified by a committee appointed for that purpose at a regular meeting, and if any refused to attend, their *vote* of course could not be properly counted on either side. If a party in any town, are sensible they cannot outvote their opponents in a particular measure, and hence generally or universally stay away from a regular meeting, when the question is to be tried, and thus perhaps allow a unanimous vote to pass, will such conduct on their part *annul* said meeting, or compel those who attend on their duty to run over town, and learn how each man stands in regard to the question, and then count his vote, as if present? So with regard to this Church-meeting. All, or nearly all, of the majority list, as given in the 'Manual,' were present and voted, while none of the minority list were present, and thus deprived themselves of action in this case. Those lists were thus arranged from the immediate proceedings of the two parties in withdrawing from the old parish. From that date, this majority considered their Pastor as dismissed, and proceeded, as the First Church, to procure another, whom they settled the following year. Soon after Mr. Howard White withdrew and joined the Baptist church, Mr. John Studley came over to the majority, and recently Mr Simeon Vinal has made request to be restored in good standing with our Church. These are the simple facts in the case. And they show most unquestionably that Mr. Thomas was truly dismissed as Pastor of the Church, and also that far too much has been yielded by the many to the few, or no argument whatever could have been urged against the validity of that dismission.

to be guility of such inconsistency. But he was poor, and unable to pay a 'tax,' while the others were gentlemen of some property. Now I leave it for you and others to decide, which would be the most desirable associate, or the party in the Church which acted most inconsistently in regard to these individuals. I regret the necessity of disclosing such painful events, but you will remember who is the author of this necessity.

When a church has so far degenerated as to give up the choice of a pastor exclusively to the parish, to invite all the congregation disposed, whether professors or not, to partake with them at the sacrament, and not to discipline members, with whom they would not associate 'in the common business of life,' or 'judge them fit companions,' I must also acknowledge, what you seem to take for granted, that there is no difference between a Church and a Parish !*

Thirdly. In regard to the date. This I am willing to relinquish, as being immaterial and unworthy of dispute.

From what has been said, it is evident, the whole paragraph under examination, from Mr. Deane's 'History,' should read something as follows: In A. D. 1824, a large majority of the First Church, being greatly dissatisfied with the present loose state of things, particularly with regard to their Covenant and Confession of Faith, became desirous to renew and 'establish' more firmly their ancient covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity. This was effected by a fair majority, early in the following year. But the Pastor not approving this covenant (being a Unitarian) refused to take any notice of the regular votes and proceedings of his Church, and three fourths [perhaps] of the Parish, with a few of his Church, sustaining him in this course, the Church, as a body, were led to the painful necessity of dismissing him as their Pastor, and even of withdrawing from the house, where their fathers worshipped; all of which was done, in exact accordance with the approbation and advice of a regular Ecclesiastical Council convened for the purpose. During this spring (1825) they also formed a new Society.

This is a true account of the matter; but how poorly it coincides with Mr. Deane's statement, can be seen by the discerning and impartial. 'Perhaps it is needless now for me to say, that in my opinion you have entirely failed' to justify Mr. Deane's statements, and I doubt not the decision of every candid, unprejudiced mind, will agree with me in this conclusion.

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* Says Dr. Emmons, 'It is a dark mark against professors of religion, that they are generally so backward to discharge the duty of gospel discipline towards their offending brethren. [Matt. 18: 15–17.] By this neglect, they may suffer the leaven of corruption to spread gradually, until it has leavened the whole lump, and ruined the whole church.' 1 Cor. 5: 6–8. — *Works*, vol. v. p. 456.

If so, you 'will join with me in condemning the falsehoods, and in making them public.' If you and I cannot decide, the *public* must.

'They had not then perhaps been taught that disobedience to the civil law was a duty.' For whom you intend this I am not aware. If for myself, I can truly say, I am not conscious of having said or done any thing to justify such a remark. I presume, however, you will not disagree with me, in such a case as the Salem witchcraft, that, were the same laws to exist now as formerly, 'disobedience' would be a virtue, rather than a sin. I advocate disobedience to civil law on no other grounds; and even here, where we can innocently submit, though with suffering, (as in the case of our funds,) I cling to obedience to law, till that law shall be repealed by the proper authority; so that you and others associated with you, may rest contented (so far as I am concerned) to feed on another's bread, till conscience and a sense of duty may lead you to relinquish our funds, with interest, to the First Church of Christ in Scituate, and the Society connected with it. We ask not for funds, given to support Unitarianism, if you have such, but for those given by our Calvinistic fathers, and evidently for the support of Calvinistic worship. I am willing that Unitarians, and other errorists, should have full liberty of speech, and advocate their doctrines, however destructive, if they will, but I wish to see them do it honorably and fairly — upon their own and not another's capital! It is this latter evil of which I complain. Often has a church been turned out of their house of worship, and then (unless there was a large fund connected) has the door been locked for a large part or the entire year together. Such houses are monuments of injustice. But the 'waning power' of Unitarianism is not always to be unrighteously sustained, by a virtuous and impartial legislature and judiciary. I doubt not still more enlightened times are at hand. Several of the old societies, which had driven out the church from their houses of worship, have recently invited them to return, and enjoy the pastor of their choice, as in Berlin, Acton, &c.* This is as it should be, or, if the separation be continued, let strict justice be done by both parties.

You inquire, 'For what purpose' is our 'Manual' published, 'calling up the whole matter' (of prejudices and difficulties) 'anew for discussion and altercation.' I think, Sir, what has already been written will sufficiently answer this inquiry, and 'point' to the 'benefit' both 'spiritual and temporal,' which ought to spring from it, and from this investigation. I doubt not you, and many of your associates, would be glad to have been

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* I may add, Gardner, Princeton, &c.

left without discussion and disturbance in your present possessions. So does the slaveholder wish to be *let alone*. But, says Burke, on the use of agitation, 'I love *clamor* when there is *abuse*. The alarm-bell disturbs the inhabitants, but saves them from being burnt in their beds.' The circumstances called for our 'Manual.' Our old people, and those most intimately acquainted with the facts were fast dying off, while the title of 'First Church' was still claimed by both parties. It seemed both reasonable and important therefore, that it should be decided while *living witnesses* could testify. But if 'old prejudices' are 'to wear out' by neglecting truth and justice, and the salvation of souls, unwilling as I am, naturally, for strife and contention, I should still prefer, like Paul, to be 'disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.' A state of agitation is preferable to one of moral death!

Your poetic close. It is no new thing for evil-doers to charge severity upon the faithful, because they declare unto men their sins and the inevitable consequences thereof. At such times, nothing is more common than to claim for themselves a large share of 'liberality' and 'charity.' But the Puritans, or their legitimate descendants, will make no compromise with error, or fear to declare the whole counsel of God whether men will hear or forbear: and should the land of their fathers again prove unworthy of them, I doubt not they will be willing again to suffer the loss of all things, for the sake of Christ and a good conscience, and seek for another wilderness in some new world, where they may enjoy their religion, and plant another New England, with all her beloved institutions!

I might dwell on several other points, touched upon in your letters, but I have already, perhaps, quite wearied your patience. I have regretted the introduction of foreign matter, and also the necessity laid upon me, of taking up first principles — the mere elements of ecclesiastical usage, in order to make myself understood. I may also add, it is much easier to make 'charges' or 'false statements' than to refute or sustain them. I am also happy to see, that you find no more things of importance in our 'Manual,' which 'seem strange' to you, and that these arise principally, at least, from overlooking the first principles of Congregationalism.

It will be seen, I trust, that after all you have said to overthrow *ecclesiastical* authority, (which is derived from Christ, the Head of the Church,) it would, on the same principle, equally overthrow all *civil* authority. But it is vain to make such sweeping inferences. I doubt not, both the civil and ecclesiastical power will remain, notwithstanding some 'misdeeds and failures,' both by ecclesiastics and civilians. These authorities, as we have seen, need not necessarily interfere with each other. They move, or

should move, in different spheres, and, like different elements in nature, would harmonize with and support each other,* did not men attempt to draw inferences with horse power, or weigh gold and silver in scales of logic. Yes, dear Sir, the Church and ecclesiastical authority will stand, though Voltaire, the earth, and 'the gates of hell' even, should strive against them. They have already stood many a blast from the enemy, but each vain effort has been like the stormy winds upon the sturdy oak, only serving to fasten its roots more firmly among the rocks below. It is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom to his saints. The Church is dearer to Him than the apple of his eye, and he will especially stand by it in the hour of assault and trial.

I fear, dear Sir, that, unless you change your course and spirit, you will be found, at last, to have been fighting against God and his people. I do, therefore, affectionately and earnestly solicit your attention to a resurvey of this whole matter, and also to a serious and prayerful examination of the Word of God, in reference to the evidence of your hopes for eternity. You may trifle with such suggestions now, but another day may disclose to you and others the infinite folly of such derision. Believe me not to be your enemy, because I have attempted to tell you the truth. I wish you and your Society no other harm, — yea, a similar blessing, — that the sincere and virtuous abolitionist does the slaveholder, in showing him his sin, and the path of duty, that he may repent and reform. And I hope, that, laying aside all prejudice and bitterness, you and your Society will exhibit such a spirit and such conduct, in reference to the subject in hand, as you and every true friend of the slave would wish to behold in the master. Examine, dear Sir, with candor and impartiality, all the facts and circumstances in this case, and may the Lord enable you to decide in his fear, what is truth, and what is duty. That the blessing of Almighty God may ever rest upon you and yours, is the sincere and fervent prayer of

Your unworthy Servant,

DANIEL WIGHT, JR.

P. S. I have delayed sending this several days longer than I otherwise should, from your expected absence from town, &c. If I have used severity, I have endeavored, so far as I know my-

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*'Church government stands in no opposition to civil government. They may both stand together and flourish,— the one being helpful unto the other in their distinct and due administrations.' 'As it is unlawful for church officers to meddle with the sword of the magistrate, so it is unlawful for the magistrate to meddle with the work proper to church officers.'— *Camb. Plat.* chap. 17, secs. 2 and 5.

self, that it should be only the severity of truth. At this we ought not to complain. It will be understood that our Correspondence on this subject is now 'finished.' I am satisfied it would be useless to continue it any longer, and shall not therefore consider myself under obligation to add.*

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* See Appendix, Note E. p. 61.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. [Referred to on p. 26.]

The following quotations (in harmony with notes on pages 24, 25) will throw light upon the authority of this dismission:

'*Ordination*, we account nothing else but the solemn putting a man into his place and office in the church, whereunto he had right before by election; being like the installing of a magistrate in the commonwealth. Ordination, therefore, is not to go before, but to follow election. The essence and substance of the outward calling of an ordinary officer in the church, does not consist in his *ordination*, but in his voluntary and free election, by the church, and his accepting that election; whereupon is founded that relation between pastor and flock, between such a minister and such a people. Ordination does not constitute an officer, nor give him the essentials of his office.'—*Camb. Plat.* chap. 9, sec. 2.

Cyprian says, that, 'in his time,' [A. D. 200—260,] 'the people' [that is, members of the church] 'had the *power*, as of choosing worthy ministers, so, likewise, of refusing and casting off those who were not so; that this power belongs to the church, and that it was given to the church by divine authority.' (*Cyprian*, in *Punchard*, p. 196.) *Origen* says, 'If I seem to you to be a right hand, and am called a Presbyter,' [Pastor,] 'and seem to preach the Word of God; yet, if I shall do any thing contrary to ecclesiastical discipline, and the rule of the gospel, so that I give scandal or offence to the church, let the whole church conspire, and with one consent cut me off; although I am their right hand.' (*Origen*, in *Punchard*, p. 196.) The learned *Grotius* says, 'It was not only the right of the people to flee and avoid an unfaithful Pastor, but that such a Pastor, by virtue of the sentence against him, lost his *pastoral right*.' (*Grotius*, in *Punchard*, p. 196.) *Dr. Emmons*, of our own day, says that 'As a church have a right to choose and ordain their own minister,' [Pastor,] 'so they must have, of course, a right to *dismiss* him for what they deem good reasons. Those who have a right to put into office, have a right to put out of office. The church either puts their ministers into office, or delegate power to neighboring ministers to do it for them, which is the same thing as doing it themselves.' (*Works*, vol. 5, p. 451.) 'They' [the church] 'have a right to *dismiss* their own minister, whenever they judge he has forfeited his ministerial character. The right of dismission belongs *solely to the church*, who may dismiss their minister without the advice or contrary to the advice of a council, if they think he has forfeited his ministerial character; but not otherwise. (*Emmons*, in *Punchard*, p. 197.) 'Congregational churches have the power to *dismiss their pastors* as they have to *ordain* them, without advice of council; but if they *ordain* by the advice and the assistance of neighboring churches, consistency requires, that they should *dismiss* by the same advice and assistance.' (*Punchard*, p. 132.)

By comparing the above principles with the steps taken in Rev. Mr. Thomas's dismission, it will be seen that he was, indeed, truly dismissed, according to the most sound ecclesiastical and Congregational usage. The ecclesiastical council gave advice, and the Church accepted and followed it.

NOTE B. [Referred to on p. 27.]

I take this opportunity to state some of the facts which called forth this information. I do this, not only to illustrate the paragraph, with which this note is connected, but also to correct the false impression upon the minds of many in this community, unfavorable to myself, as connected with what may be called the 'Beech-woods difficulty.' Before stating the facts, relative to this difficulty, I will mention two events, bearing upon the subject, as preliminary. Soon after my ordination, in the fall of 1842, 'The Young Ladies and Gentlemen's Total Abstinence Association' held a temperance meeting, in commemoration of the death of two of their members, to which the different ministers of the place were invited. After other exercises, I was called upon to address the meeting. In the remarks offered, I endeavored to show, that although temperance encourages morality, in various ways, yet we need something more than mere morality to prepare us for death and heaven. Rev. Mr. Sewall followed, in other remarks, the tendency of which was to overthrow what I had advanced. This was noticed by many, if not all present. At first, I thought of replying on the spot; but being a comparative stranger in the place, and not wishing to get into a controversy, if it could be consistently avoided, I let it pass in silence. The fourth of July following we held a Sabbath School celebration, including the schools connected with our own, the Baptist, and Methodist churches, not inviting, formally, the Unitarian school. This gave some offence. But we knew that little could be said to any purpose on such an occasion, without giving, perhaps, still greater offence, and accordingly we followed the now more general practice on such occasions. The remarks at the temperance meeting had also taught us what to expect. These two meetings (the temperance and Sabbath school) had, doubtless, an influence on the Beech-woods difficulty.

In Dec. 1842, I commenced holding religious meetings at the house of Capt. Henry Damon, who lives in the Beech-woods neighborhood,* and continued them, without interruption, till the July following. The schoolhouse, in this district, had been closed for years against all religious meetings, but during this winter was opened for a temperance meeting. We had much desired this house for religious meetings, and especially for a Sabbath school, and had occasionally spoken on the subject with some in the district. I had delivered a lyceum lecture in several neighboring places, and was requested to deliver the same in this school-house, if it could be obtained for the purpose. Hoping it might prepare the way for opening the house for a Sabbath school and religious meetings, I consented, and, by making some additions, delivered two lectures instead of one. This was in May, 1843. It soon appeared that there would, probably, be no difficulty in obtaining the school-house for a Sabbath school and preaching every Sabbath evening. It may be proper here to state, that this large neighborhood is situated about four miles from any meeting-house, and has suffered much from the want of a nearer place of worship. It is also about six

* The neighborhood here intended is in the northwest part of Scituate, School District No. 5.

miles from the residence of Rev. Mr. Sewall; and as he had seldom or never held Sabbath evening meetings since his settlement here, (some 12 or 14 years,) it was not even imagined that he would wish to join us, if desired; and much less to make interference, from his well known gentlemanly conduct. Accordingly, arrangements were made to establish a Sabbath school, to be held every Sabbath evening, at 5 1-2 o'clock, and preaching at 6 1-2 o'clock. As the Baptist Society had a considerable number of families in this district, and as some of the district adjoining, in Cohasset, where Rev. Mr. Babcock had several families, wished to unite, I proposed to the Baptist minister, Rev. Mr. Damon, and to Rev. Mr. Babcock, to unite with me in this object, to which they cheerfully agreed. We then made arrangements to carry on the school and meeting together, — each preaching in order, once in three weeks. Notice was given accordingly, and the school was organized July 16th, with nine classes. The next Sabbath evening the house was more than full, and the prospects of usefulness very gratifying. But these prospects were soon darkened. At the close of this meeting, request was made to the Rev. Mr. Conant,* (the Baptist minister, who had just commenced laboring in their Society, but who did not know, definitely, what arrangements had been made,) to notify a meeting in that house, for Rev. Mr. Sewall, to be held a fortnight from that evening, at the very hour of our services. It appears that he had heard what was in progress, and visited one of his principal men in the district, and got him to consult more or less of the district, to see if *they* were willing that *he* should join us in our meeting; and if so, to request the above notice. I had not been consulted at all, and knew nothing of it till after the notice was given. I did not blame the district, as they did not, probably, foresee the difficulty which must necessarily follow The next Tuesday, I had an interview with several neighboring ministers of the Norfolk Association, who met on that day, and asked their advice, which perfectly harmonized with my own previous views. On Thursday, I called on Rev. Mr. Sewall, to learn *why* he had thus interfered, — supposing he must have been ignorant of the circumstances, and the arrangements previously made; but found it otherwise. He supposed that perhaps one third of the district belonged to his Society; one third to the Baptist and one third to ours; and he could not allow us to occupy the whole ground, to disseminate our principles, &c. and not allow him an equal chance to defend his; and as for Mr. Babcock and his people, they had no right in the house, or any share in the school or meetings, — he would not suffer it, &c. He was willing, however, to unite with me and the Baptist minister, in sustaining the meeting, and said he could heartily recommend his people to attend our school and meeting, and inquired why I could not recommend my people to come and hear him? In reply, I told him I must first inquire whether he believed in certain doctrines, — as the supreme Divinity of Christ; the Trinity; Total Depravity; the Atonement, &c., to which he answered, one by one, in the *negative*. I then told him here was my reason, why I could not encourage my people to attend on his instruction, or join with him in union meetings, — that I regarded the rejection of these doctrines (mentioned in the Correspondence) as a virtual rejection of Christianity, and destructive to the souls of men! I told him, I was willing he should have the school-house, if he wished, every day and evening in the week, except the two hours we had selected; that I wished not to restrict his liberty of speech, in the least; that there were twenty other school-houses in town, and other neighborhoods as destitute, perhaps, as this, where he might labor; and I assured him, if he made a beginning elsewhere, I would not thus interfere; the field is wide

* Mr. Conant took the place of Mr. Damon about this time.

enough for us both, &c.; but I could not consent to give up this house, during the hours for which we had made arrangements, &c. He replied, we had selected the *best hours* for a meeting; that few could be assembled on week day evenings, &c. I replied, that our meetings for the past seven months had been on Wednesday evenings, and were well attended; our assemblies had varied, perhaps, from 25 to 75; also, that if, after twelve years experience in Scituate, he had found out that between 5 and 7 o'clock, Sabbath evening, was the *very best* time for a religious meeting, I hoped he would improve it in future, &c. After this conversation, of several hours, in his study, I left him, telling him that I hoped, on further reflection, he would think differently on the subject,—see that such interference was unchristian and ungentlemanly, and let me know his decision before the Sabbath.

On returning from this interview, I called at the Baptist meeting-house, where a meeting was in session. At the close of the meeting, I made known to some of the brethren this conversation, and after some consultation, we thought it best to visit the district, and obtain another place, if possible, for the school and meetings, and to give up the school-house The next morning, two of the Baptist brethren went among their families in the district, and Mr. Orange Litchfield went with me to obtain another place. Calling on Capt. Damon, we found the Rev. Mr. Sewall there before us, persuading him to give his consent. We then had another interview of several hours, before these witnesses, when the denial of the aforesaid doctrines (mentioned more fully in the Correspondence) was again made, namely, Total Depravity, Regeneration, the Atonement, the Divinity of Christ, the Trinity, and his unbelief in the eternity of future punishment. This part of the Correspondence has been read to them, and they testify to its correctness [by their own written signatures]. In closing this second conversation, Mr. Sewall consented to withdraw entirely from the field, unless we could permit him to take his turn in preaching,—promising, however, that if we would consent to his joining with us, he would advance no sentiments in opposition to ours,—that he would *conform* to our doctrines so far as he went, &c. &c.

With these new developments, we felt still less inclined to unite, as such a union would only tend to give the appearance that we were all one in doctrine, while in fact we are 'so diametrically opposite.' We therefore concluded to withdraw entirely from the school-house to a private dwelling, which those Baptist brethren had found, [that morning,] and which we could have with but little expense and trouble. It was the opinion of some in the district, that if we attempted to remain in the school-house, we should be disturbed and it was thought prudent, therefore, to retire at once. We were thus virtually driven from this place by the above interference. The school and meetings were continued with general interest, and, we believe, with profit, till Dec. The next January, a plan was formed of building a small union chapel in this neighborhood, for evangelical purposes, and some two hundred dollars and more have since been raised for this object. Whether this plan will ultimately succeed, is yet to be seen. No Sabbath school and but few meetings have been enjoyed in this part of the town the past season, because the school-house was considered closed, and no other place, suitable, could be obtained for the purpose. If souls perish in this neighborhood, through this neglect, who will be to blame? Rev. Mr. Sewall has never preached in this school-house, before or since this difficulty, though the house was open for years for such an object, since his settlement here. The fable of 'the dog in the manger' appears thus fully illustrated in this affair.

But many still say, why did we not submit, and go on together in those meetings? Unitarians themselves have given the true answer; it would

be a sinful 'compromise,' which 'neither can nor ought to be' made, — an effort to blend 'light and darkness,' 'Christ and Belial,' — things admitted both by Unitarians and Orthodox as impossibilities. Why, then, force us to attempt impossibilities, or charge us with blame for not attempting them?

Having given, as I believe, a fair and correct statement of these facts, I leave the candid to pass their own judgment.

'SCITUATE, Dec. 25, 1844.

'This may certify, that we, the undersigned, having been more or less intimately acquainted with the facts, relative to the Beech-woods difficulty, (so called,) from the time of their occurrence, can testify, that, so far as we are personally informed, we believe the above statements are impartial and correct.

(Signed,)

THOMAS CONANT, }
FRANKLIN DAMON, } *Ministers of the Baptist Church, in Scituate, in* 1843.
DANIEL H. BABCOCK, *Pastor of the Second Church, in Cohasset.*
PAUL CLAPP, }
EDWARD JAMES, } *Superintendents of the Beech-woods Sabbath school,* 1843.
HENRY DAMON, 2d,
BENJAMIN PRATT, JR.
SAMUEL HUNT,
ORANGE LITCHFIELD.

The above persons, who have thus kindly given me their signatures, are among those most intimately acquainted with the whole difficulty, either living in the immediate neighborhood, or having been more or less actively engaged in the Sabbath school or meeting. The document is considered important, not only as exhibiting the facts, in regard to the Beech-woods difficulty, but as it discloses, at least negatively, some of the peculiar sentiments of Unitarianism, — sentiments that are still acknowledged openly with great reluctance. Language employed 15 or 20 years since, is still, in some measure, applicable to this Unitarian concealment. 'For some cause or other, they have manifested a disposition to keep back and conceal their sentiments. They have shown a reluctance to come out frankly and openly, and make the world acquainted with their views. In many instances, they have employed words and phrases similar to those in popular use, but employed them in a disguised and peculiar sense. And their sentiments have come to be known, so far as they are known, only in consequence of incidental disclosures, or as they have been drawn out by the force of discussion.' An aged Unitarian minister is reported as saying, in his charge to a young minister, 'The time has been when our peculiar sentiments were so unpopular that it was hazardous to teach them. We were obliged to conceal them from public view, or disclose them in ambiguous language.' A writer in the 'Christian Examiner' says, 'Little time has elapsed since an objection to the chief doctrines of Orthodoxy could not be whispered safely.' 'I can remember the time, and I am not old, when, though Boston was full of Unitarian sentiment, there was no open profession of it. A dead silence was maintained in the pulpit on doctrinal subjects, — a silence which was not disturbed by the press.' (Vol. 3. pp. 113, 114.) Numerous quotations from Unitarians and others, on this subject, might be given, were it necessary. The following, with the above, must suffice. Says Dr. Miller, 'In all ages, from the time of Ebion to the present hour, where the mass of the surrounding population was Orthodox, Unitarians have manifested a

disposition to conceal their sentiments, — to equivocate, to evade, and even solemnly to deny them, when questioned, and to disguise themselves under the garb of Orthodoxy, to a degree which no other sect, calling itself Christian, ever manifested To what, I ask, is this fact to be ascribed? I leave it with you, Christian brethren, to solve the question. I will only say, that I can think of no possible reason for it, but such as must stamp the character of deep corruption upon the Unitarian cause.' 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness, shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.' (2 Pet. 2: 1—3.) 'For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Jude 4.) Says another writer, 'Unitarianism, whatever may be its character in other respects, will be found uniformly to have borne these marks of error. Wherever introduced, it has been brought in "privily,"— has "crept in unawares."' This we know to have been true, in regard to the introduction of Unitarianism into this Commonwealth. There is still on the part of many in this community, an attempt to smooth over all differences between the Orthodox and Unitarian systems, as if we were all essentially one, though, in reality, as opposite as the poles. But we have no confidence in any such concealment, deception, or flattery. Let facts speak for themselves, and the community would remain no longer deceived; they would be prepared to take an intelligent and decided stand.

NOTE C. [Referred to on p. 35.]

The following is the extract referred to: 'Sir, I take it upon myself to say, that in no country in the world, upon either continent, can there be found a body of ministers of the gospel who perform so much service to man, in such a full spirit of self-denial, under so little encouragement from government of any kind, and under circumstances, always much straitened and often distressed, as the ministers of the gospel, in the United States, of all denominations!

'They form no part of any established order of religion: they constitute no hierarchy; they enjoy no peculiar privileges, in some of the States they are even shut out from all participation in the political rights and privileges enjoyed by their fellow-citizens; they enjoy no tithes, — no public provision of any kind. And except here and there, in large cities, where a wealthy individual occasionally makes a donation for the support of public worship, what have they to depend upon? They have to depend entirely on the voluntary contributions of those who hear them.

'And this body of clergymen has shown, to the honor of their own country, and to the astonishment of the hierarchies of the old world, that it is practicable, in free governments, to raise and sustain a body of clergymen, which, for devotedness to their sacred calling, for purity of life and character, for learning, intelligence, piety, and that wisdom which cometh from above, is inferior to none, and superior to most others, by voluntary contributions alone.

'I hope that our learned men have done something for the honor of our literature abroad. I hope that the courts of justice and members of the bar of this country have done something to elevate the character of the profession of the law. I hope that the discussions above (in Congress) have done something to meliorate the condition of the human race, to secure and extend the great charter of human rights, and to strengthen and advance the great principles of human liberty. But I contend that no literary efforts, no adjudications, no constitutional discussions, — nothing that has been done or said in favor of the great interests of universal man, has done this country more credit, at home and abroad, than the establishment of our body of clergymen, their support by voluntary contributions, and the general excellence of their character, their piety, and learning.'

NOTE D. [Referred to on p. 35.]

The following extracts are from a Sermon, which came to hand just as this Correspondence was ready for the press. It would be interesting if reprinted entire, notwithstanding its *quaintness*, as it would show, in no small degree, the religious sentiments then received. It is entitled, 'A Sermon, preached in the First Parish, in Scituate, April 20, 1763, at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. Ebenezer Grosvenor, to the Pastoral Office. By Samuel Dunbar, M. A., Pastor of the First Church, in Stoughton. Boston: printed and sold by S. Kneeland, in Queen street, M DCC LXIII.' The preface is 'by another hand.'

The following extracts are from the preface: 'By the Word of God, we are taught some fundamental truths, that the light of nature could not give us the least intimations of, but are matters of mere Revelation. Among which are the doctrines of a Mediator: his Atonement for sin; his raising the dead and final judging the world. The doctrine of our redemption by Jesus Christ is the main subject of all revealed religion, and the substance of all divine revelation, from the beginning of our Bible to the end thereof.' 'As the corruption of the best things is the worst, so the Word of God, which is so rich a blessing to a guilty world, perishing in ignorance and darkness, when it is corrupted is very pernicious and destructive to the souls of men: instead of directing them in the true way to heaven, it leads them blindfold down to hell. There are none surer of the devil's snare, than those who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.' 'Those that corrupt the Word of God, in any of the essential articles of it, destroy their own souls; but the ministers of the gospel, who have the care of other men's souls, as well as their own, and whose business it is to show men the way of salvation, if they corrupt the Word of God, they destroy not only their own souls, but the souls of others also. Instead of guiding them to heaven and happiness, they lead them blindfold to ruin and destruction: which greatly aggravates their guilt, and will increase their future torment.' The preface closes as follows: 'May Mr. Grosvenor, at whose ordination this sermon was preached, take it as a seasonable caution to himself, and bear it in mind all his days; so that he may not be of the number of those many, who corrupt the Word of God; but may always preach the plain truths of the gospel in their purity and simplicity! May he be long continued a burning and shining light, in the golden candlestick where he is placed! And may the people of his charge profit savingly by his ministry, and rejoice together hereafter in the day of Christ's glorious appearing!'

The Sermon is founded on 2 Cor. 2: 17, — 'We are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God.' It commences with this sentence: 'Next to the two greatest mercies of God to a sinful and perishing world, namely, the giving his Son to obtain redemption for all his people, and sending his

Spirit to make application of it to them, is the revelation of this his saving purpose in his Word.' The doctrine inculcated is, 'that it highly concerns the ministers of God's Word to be exceeding careful, that in their ministry they do not corrupt the Word of God.' Here, Mr. Dunbar says, are 'two propositions I would speak to, for clearing the point. I. There are some in the ministry who corrupt the Word of God. II. It highly concerns the ministers of God's Word to be exceeding careful that they do not corrupt it.' Under the first proposition he says, 'There are more especially three ways of doing this: either by adding to the Word, or by detracting from, or by wresting the Word of God, and forcing it to a meaning never intended by God.' He enlarges under each method, and then adds, 'Now it is notorious, that many preachers of the Word do, in one or other of these ways, corrupt it. The contrary articles of faith which they hold, preach, and print, as to election, regeneration, justification, and the like, one side affirming them to be the doctrines of the gospel; the other as strenuously denying them to be so, that is, as to the meaning of them; and each side alleging Scripture, and fetching their arguments thence, for the vindication and support of their principles; it being impossible that both sides should have the truth, because they are diametrically opposite, it is plain, there must be some corrupting of the Word,—some wresting of the Scriptures; for the Word of God is a pure fountain, and cannot send forth sweet water and bitter. Truth and falsehood can no more proceed from the Word of God, than light and darkness can from the sun.' He says, that 'charity obliges us to think,' that many corrupt the Word 'from ignorance,'—'but as to many others, I do not know that it would be any breach of charity to suppose, that they do it with design, and purely to vindicate and support some erroneous notions they have imbibed and have a favor for.' 'The pride of carnal reason is one great incitement to men's corrupting the Word of God.' 'The enmity of men's carnal hearts is another. A vain affectation of novelty and singularity may be a prevailing motive with some. A man-pleasing humor is another temptation to corrupt the Word of God. The doctrines and laws of God's Word are most cross to the vanity of men's minds, and to the lusts of their hearts. The things of the Spirit are mere foolishness to the natural man. The doctrines of the Word are too mysterious; the commands are too strict; the threatenings are too severe; therefore carnal men cannot endure sound doctrine. They are offended at preaching the truths of God, and virtually say to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things: prophesy deceits; preach any thing to us but the truths of God. And therefore, that they may give no offence, and that they may please men, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Instead of showing in their doctrine uncorruptness, sincerity, and sound speech, that cannot be condemned, they study to avoid those truths that they apprehend will be ungrateful to their people; or to handle them in such a perverted, unscriptural manner, as may be pleasing to them. Hereby they may think to serve and advance their temporal interest; as they that mix water with wine, enhance their gain, and use flattering words as a cloak of covetousness. This view to their worldly interest has no small influence upon those who, for filthy lucre, a fat benefice, a good living, took the oversight of a flock of Christ to corrupt the Word.'

Under the second proposition, he says, of ministers, 'Sometimes they are settled among a people that cannot bear sound doctrine. They are offended at the plain preaching of Gospel truths; they have itching ears, and want to hear some new doctrine; or they dislike the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of the Word. In such cases, a minister is under a strong temptation, either wholly to pass them by, and to shun delivering the whole counsel of God, or to adulterate them, thereby to make them palatable and

pleasing to them.' 'Besides, the good old doctrines of the gospel are now, with many, much out of credit; and to preach them, exposes to the contempt and censures of the world. They will be looked upon as weak brethren, of low attainments, and unacquainted with, and unskilful in, the modern, polite, and rational way of preaching. And to those who love the praise of men, this is no little temptation to corrupt the Word, and to espouse the principles, and imitate the preaching of those who are of highest reputation, whether it be consonant to Scripture or not.'

'Besides, in their taking the ministry upon them, they virtually and implicitly, if not expressly and explicitly, promise to preach the Word, and that only, and truly, and wholly; declaring nothing but the counsel of God, and all that. But if, after this solemn promise to God and his people, they, through carelessness or wilfulness, corrupt the Word of God, they will be found liars unto God. To lie unto men, is bad; but to lie unto God, is most heinous and presumptuous wickedness. So Peter thought it, when he told Ananias, "thou hast not lied unto men only, but unto God."

'Farther, ministers corrupting the Word of God, will be likely to do a great deal of mischief to the souls of men. The design of their ministry is to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and then to be helpers of their faith and joy. But, by corrupting the Word of the gospel, they will, probably, defeat the end of their ministry; for it cannot be expected that God's blessing will accompany their unsound doctrine; but rather, that God will blast their ministry, and curse all their labors; since he hath threatened, that such false teachers shall not profit his people at all. Nor is this all, — that they shall do them no spiritual good; but they are like to do them much spiritual hurt; for many, partly through their natural disgust of divine truth and partly from love and reverence to them, will be ready to suck in greedily their errors; by which they will be more confirmed in their dislike of, and opposition to, the truths of the gospel, and hardened in wickedness. When false teachers bring in gross errors, and even damnable heresies, there will be found many following their pernicious ways; readily drinking in, and stiffly defending, and zealously propagating their erroneous tenets. Their word will eat, as doth a canker, — will spread far and wide, and enter deep. If there should be any that will not receive the Word, as it is corrupted by them, yet it may be a great stumbling and offence to them. And ought not these considerations, the unprofitableness of their ministry, and the mischief that erroneous doctrines may do, excite them to the greatest carefulness, that they do not, in their preaching, or any of their conversation, corrupt the Word of God?

'This corrupting the Word of God is likely to render their ministry uncomfortable to themselves, as well as unprofitable to their people. What true spiritual comfort can ministers enjoy, when they are conscious to themselves, that for some sordid ends, they are corrupters of the Word of God? Must they not have very uneasy reflections upon themselves! Must not such passages of the Word, wherein God threatens those priests that were partial in the law, to be made contemptible and bare before all the people; and that if any pervert the gospel of Christ, and preach any other gospel, he shall be accursed, — spoil all that poor little satisfaction they may take in winning over some few deluded souls to their opinions? And as this corrupting the Word of God tends to cut them off from all inward spiritual comfort, so it leaves them but little room to expect any outward temporal comfort. Though possibly they may, and probably will, proselyte some of the more weak and ignorant, or some of the more careless and vicious, yet it is very likely that the more serious and judicious and godly among their people will be grieved and offended, and protest against their erroneous doctrines, and withdraw from their ministry; and after awhile seek their removal from them. And when matters are come to this pass between a

minister and his people, methinks he can enjoy but very little comfort among them. Nor is this any imaginary inconvenience, — but the late times have afforded instances to prove this uncomfortable issue of ministers corrupting the Word of God.

'But if ministers can make a shift to enjoy some false peace in their own minds, and some peace among their people, notwithstanding their corrupt preaching, yet this corrupting the Word of God brings them under the heaviest guilt, and exposes them to a greater damnation. They cannot but know, that it doth so. The Word of God sets forth the heinous wickedness of false prophets and teachers, and denounces terrible woes and threatenings against them. And if any set of men shall in hell have a greater damnation than another, wicked, unfaithful ministers bid fair for it. Of them it is said, that their judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not; but they bring upon themselves swift destruction. These are the wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. The false prophet shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and be tormented for ever and ever. Oh, what an aggravated damnation must theirs be, who have done so great wickedness, in corrupting the Word of God, against so much light and knowledge, — against their own solemn promises and engagements; and thereby have been accessary to overthrowing the faith of some, and perhaps to their eternal destruction! Oh, this sin of ministers, in perverting the gospel, is very great; and their punishment, except they repent, will be very tremendous! These several foregoing considerations evidently prove, that it highly concerns the ministers of the Word of God to be exceeding careful, that in their ministry they do not corrupt the Word of God.'

The Sermon closes with a 'brief address' to the Pastor elect. We are unable to give any full quotations from this, as the copy in our possession is wanting one or more pages, — having suffered from the effects of use and age. Enough, however, is preserved to show, that it was through the 'urgency' and 'importunity' of Mr. Grosvenor, that Mr. Dunbar preached this Ordination Sermon. We may, therefore, believe, that Mr. Grosvenor agreed, in general, with the views entertained by its author; and also, with those expressed in the preface. If so, he evidently believed in 'the atonement for sin,' or 'our redemption by Jesus Christ,' as 'the main subject of all revealed religion.' He also believed in a 'devil,' and 'hell,' as well as heaven, — in 'election, regeneration, and justification;' in a 'mediator, the resurrection and final judgment;' 'the enmity of men's carnal heart by nature;' 'the inspiration of the Scriptures,' and that they contain 'truths which are necessary to salvation.' Such were, evidently, some of the doctrines of Mr. Grosvenor, and, consequently, of the church who called him to the pastoral office by their free election. Mr. Grosvenor was Pastor of this Church from 1763 till 1780. With such a minister in the First Parish for seventeen years, is it probable that Unitarianism was then the prevailing religion of this Church, or even of the Parish?

NOTE E. [Referred to on p. 50.]

[The following letter was sent after both parties had considered the Correspondence 'finished.' It is thought just and proper, however, that it should be appended, with such *Notes* as the case seemed to require.]

SCITUATE, Oct. 31, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.:

Dear Sir:— On my return home, Saturday evening, Oct. 19th, your roll of nine sheets, closely written, and commenced Sept. 30th, was handed me at the post-office. I have been since most of the time absent from home, and could not give the attention to so lengthy a communication requisite to an understanding of its contents. Notwithstanding your announcement that our Correspondence is 'finished,' I cannot refrain setting some of the contents of the nine sheets in their proper light.

I cannot but think your quotation from the Revised Statutes as very unfortunate for your case. 'The respective churches, connected and associated in public worship with such parishes and religious societies.' (Chap. 20, sec. 3.) 'Connected and associated,' not disconnected and separated from, as was the case with your First Church.* Now, Sir, examine the Revised Statutes as much as you please, you will find no provisions respecting churches, unless as connected with parishes and societies,†— nothing about qualifications of church voters,— church meetings,‡ or any authority given them to settle or dismiss ministers, or to make or annul a contract.§ A church is an association for religious purposes *only*, and for such purposes wants no civil powers; and any exercise of such powers — such as settling or dismissing a minister — is an assumption of power not warranted by law.

As you have quoted civil law, allow me to continue to quote.‖ 'A church has no power to contract with or to settle a minister; but that power resides wholly in the parish, of which the members of the church, who are inhabitants, are a part.' (*Term Rep.* vol. 9, page 277.)

'When the majority of the members of a Congregational Church separate from the majority of the parish, the minority who remain with the parish, constitute the church in such parish, and retain the rights and property thereof.' (*Term Rep.* vol. 16, page 488.)

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* Not so. My correspondent himself testifies (page 13) that there was 'a certificate in the hands of the Parish clerk, certifying that they had formed themselves into another Society. This is dated April 15, 1825.' Error is always clashing! Now if the First Church had withdrawn from the *old* Society and formed a *new* one, they could proceed to dismiss their own Pastor, as such, in harmony with both civil and ecclesiastical authority.

† We need none, it seems, in this case.

‡ Because these matters are conceded to the church, where the power for regulating its own ecclesiastical affairs, most evidently belongs.

§ Where has this power of civil contract been asserted or implied, either in the 'Church Manual' or Correspondence?

‖ Quote what? Instead of *legislative enactments*, here follows a trio of *judicial decisions!*

'A church, not connected with any congregation or religious society, has *no* legal qualities, and can exercise no control over property.' (*Term Rep.* vol. 16, page 488)*

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* Let us examine these decisions with all due respect. The first and third touch not our case in the least, as we have not assumed the *civil* right of contracts, and our Church has been connected with some Society for generations. The second judicial decision, quoted from the 'Term Reports,' requires further notice. Let us read it attentively, and then apply it to the case in Reading, (pages 37, 38,) to the case in Framingham, (page 38,) the case in Dedham, in Old Cambridge, Bedford, and elsewhere. Now is this just and right? Ought the sixty or seventy members of the church in Reading to give up their plate and records to those three women? their new house to the three or four pew-holders? Ought the large and wealthy church in Framingham to give up their all — their valuable plate, records, and if ten thousand dollars had been left them the week before by one of their own number, — to give up their all to this one old lady? So in other cases. But such is the venerable Judge's decision! Again, compare this decision with the statute of the Legislature, quoted in full on page twenty-four. Read this also attentively, and see if 'churches have, exercise, and enjoy all their accustomed privileges and liberties, respecting church order and discipline,' and whether they are 'encouraged' in these things. How compares the decision with the statute? Hear the opinion of a Judge in a neighboring State. 'The late Chief Justice [Parsons] decides that to be an inhabitant of the parish is *not* a necessary qualification of a church member; an opinion which, if just, and it is as just as the practice is uniform, prostrates, from the root, the principle assumed by this court, that those who withdraw from the society cease to be members of that particular church.'

Indeed, it has been affirmed, and we believe with justice, that the views of Judge Parker (which are in some respects self-contradictory,) 'are totally inconsistent, not only with the natural rights of the churches, but with their corporate rights, and with existing laws' — 'wholly inconsistent with the independence of the churches' — 'inconsistent with Scripture and with the institution of Christ' — 'are too evidently of a *sectarian* character' — and 'inconsistent with *previous decisions*.' Chief Justice Parsons tells us, that 'a church and parish are bodies with different powers' — that 'the deacons are made a corporation to hold property for the use of the church, and they are accountable to the members,' &c. The same things were admitted by Unitarians themselves, in 1806. (See 'The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review,' for November, 1806.) 'But it will be remembered that the constitution and *laws*, so far as they relate to the questions at issue, remain the same, [as in 1806,] and that the rights of the

I might continue quotations of this kind,* showing that the Church-meeting which dismissed Rev. Mr. Thomas, amounted to no more than the meeting of the same number of individuals for that purpose in any or the most remote part of the State; but here is enough. 'Now *is it* evident from the above, to a demonstration, that the secession of certain persons from a *society* does not, in the least, affect their church standing,' as members of a particular church?†

An attempt was made several years ago, by some, to give churches the power to settle and dismiss ministers, and otherwise control societies, contrary to law, by putting the meeting-houses in trust.‡ The pew-holders, holding their pews, subject to a condition that the church should have said powers, regardless of the society. An eminent jurist, at the time, denied the validity of such trust deeds, on the ground that no person could relinquish rights secured to him by the constitution, in any way so that he might not resume them at will. And I believe that the plan of trust deeds is

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churches are the same now as then. The progress of Unitarian light, however great and glorious it may have been, has not altered one letter of the statute-book, and has not impaired or confirmed the chartered rights of the churches in this Commonwealth. The truth is, there is no disguising it, the plan which in its operations goes to break down the churches, to take from them the right of election, and deprive them of their property, their communion furniture and records, had not been started in 1806. It had not been thought of, so far as appears, except perhaps by a select few. Consequently, Unitarians at that period interpreted the laws, and regarded the rights of the churches in the same manner as others. But the times have changed, and interests have changed, and legal opinions have changed, so that what was *law* and *right* in 1806, is now, by the same statutes, illegal and *wrong!*' Now is it right, that we should abandon all our funds, plate, records, and all, to 'a little sect, which, scarcely thirty years ago, had not courage or honesty enough to admit that they had a being;' when even Judge Parker, in the Dedham case, admits, 'There may undoubtedly be donations to a church, which, from the *nature* of the property given, ought to be considered to be in trust for *church uses*, such as *furniture* for a communion table, a baptismal font, &c. The particular use, implied from the nature of the property given, should, in such case, exclude any *claim of the parish or society*, as such, to such property.' (*Term Reports*, vol. 16, page 496.) Surely 'we ought to talk no more of *liberty*, until this foul stain on our jurisprudence is wiped away.'

* And to what purpose, if as inapplicable or unjust as the above?

† Most evidently, from what has already been said.

‡ This shows into what consternation the evangelical churches were thrown by such unjust decisions!

entirely abandoned,* from the general belief that, even if a person could relinquish his own constitutional rights, he could not relinquish the rights of his posterity or any others

Permit me here to notice a misquotation from my letter. You say, 'If a church and society are two things, capable of being severed, as you say they were, years ago.' I have said or written no such thing.†

But Orthodox clergymen, even, do not hold to this church power, for which you so strenuously contend, if a different doctrine better subserves their purpose. In the town of Wareham, as I am informed, some of the members of Mr. Nott's church, about one year ago, became dissatisfied with him, and called an ecclesiastical council, who recommended his dismissal. At a church meeting, where great exertions were used on both sides to rally their forces, the male members, by one majority, voted to dismiss Mr. Nott. (By the way, are not female members properly voters in churches?‡) Mr. Nott having three fourths or more of the society with

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* Says a distinguished minister of England, 'When the Church's enemies are very daring and threatening, it is the wisdom and duty of the Church's friends to apply themselves to God, to appeal to Him, and leave their cause with Him.'

† A mere quibble! I placed the quotation marks to include only the words 'severed' and 'years ago.' It is true, however, that I applied these expressions to the phrase 'church and *society*,' instead of 'church and *state*,' but with evident propriety. For a society is a mere creature of the state, and is endowed, as such, with only *civil* functions. The *state* cannot *give* what it does nor possess, namely: ecclesiastical functions. The term 'state' seems to include all civil authority, as the 'church' all ecclesiastical — while a 'society,' created by an *act* of the state, includes but a measure of civil authority. If, then, 'the state,' or all civil power, is, in this country, 'severed' from 'the church' or ecclesiastical power, then also must a 'society,' regularly organized, be severed from 'the church.' It is absurd to say that a part of a thing is not severed, when we admit that the whole has been. Churches and societies are usually organized on different days, keep distinct journals, and are often composed of different persons, though they may unite in some specific acts, as public worship, &c. Hence, I was not particular whether I used the term state or society in this connection. I leave others, then, to judge how much *provocation* I have given for such an abrupt reply. But my correspondent, it seems, would be understood to deny that a church and society are two things, capable of having a separate existence!

‡ 'All questions are decided by the votes of *the brethren*: the *majority* in all cases governing.' 'It is utterly inconsistent with established usage for *females* to take any part in *business transactions*. Their views and wishes are to be expressed privately to their pastor or their brethren. We suffer not a woman to speak in the church, agreeably to apostolic injunction.' (1 Cor. 14:

him, and counting his whole church, male and female, a majority of his church, took no notice of the vote, and continued his duties as pastor. Here was a case precisely similar to Mr. Thomas's, except all the parties in Wareham were Orthodox. This state of things continued in Wareham until about a month since, when another council was called, who decided that Mr. Nott should continue as pastor, and, I believe, did not even censure him for his contumacious refusal to comply with the vote of dismissal.* Now, Sir, take the civil law, as quoted above, and the Wareham case, where, by ecclesiastical authority, a vote of a majority of a church was considered a nullity, and you will cease your exclamation of 'absurdity' at my assertion, 'that after their secession they had no further control,' &c.†

You dislike my saying, Massasoit's grandson, instead of Philip's son,—call it 'sophistry, if nothing worse,' and go on to quote nearly a page from Bancroft, to show the suffering caused by Philip's war; and, it would seem, almost bring yourself to justify the treatment of this harmless child,‡ and the execution and sale into slavery of many of his tribe. Look at things as they were.§ Here was an innocent child, grandson of Massasoit, as well as son of Philip; the tribe to which he belonged exterminated; his father killed; his mother a captive. Be the disposition of the child what it might, he had no power, in any way, to injure the whites. He was in their hands, at an age when they could educate him,—form his mind as they chose.‖ Now, is it possible, the treatment he received can be justified by a Christian? The 'ministers' were applied to, and you give at length the advice of Mr. Cotton and Mr. Arnold, in which they name from Scripture several persons

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34, 35.) *Note.* 'All deviations from the course described in the text, are spots upon the fair and scriptural practice of our churches.' *Punchard, on Congregationalism.* p. 126.

* Having written to Rev. Mr. Nott for *the facts* in this case, and having freely conversed with one of the ministers, on that council which advised the dismission of Mr. Nott, who has also *read* the above statement by my correspondent, I am authorized to say that it is *essentially incorrect.* As this peculiar case, however, 'as yet is plainly unfinished,' it should have no influence upon our own, unless it be to confirm the *regular and established usage.*

† The preceding notes clearly show, that all the *grounds* of 'absurdity' still remain undisturbed.

‡ No further than the facts and circumstances go.

§ That was what I attempted in my last; but my correspondent kept the whole out of sight. Was not this sophistry? The *circumstances* under which Mario killed the dog decide the moral character of the act.—See *Watts on the Mind,* chap. 16.

‖ I believe this is not always a very easy matter, especially with an Indian, whose relatives and tribe had been thus treated. Revenge is a prominent characteristic of the Indian. As this lad had grown up, who could foretell his disposition, or know how many of the neighboring tribes he might stir up to gratify this revenge. I do not, however, fully justify this treatment, inflicted by the *civil* authorities, but I wish to look candidly 'at things as they were,' that we be not unnecessarily severe.

(doubtless, in their opinions, not so bad as Philip,) 'the children of whom were cut off by the sword of justice for the transgression of their parents, although, concerning some of those children, it be manifest that they were not capable of being actors therein.' Here, so great is your exultation, you break off before giving the 'more lenient' advice of Mr. Keith,* and say, 'Here is nothing said about sending into slavery, or, indeed, whether Philip's son should be executed at all.' 'Sophistry,' indeed, 'if nothing worse!'† What is the plain and obvious meaning of Messrs. Cotton and Arnold? 'The children of such offenders should be cut off by the sword of justice.' This innocent and harmless boy should be executed,‡ because he was Philip's son! Enough of this.

But to come to the main point, in your estimation, and, as it seems, the whole cause of your claiming to be the First Church, namely, *the funds*. You say, 'Our Trinitarian ancestors left property to the amount of some thousands of dollars, to this First Church and the Society connected with it, for the support of their religion, which we have seen is something so diametrically opposite to Unitarianism. This fund was left principally, if not entirely, near a century before Calvinism lost the ascendency in the town,' and you add, 'It is doubted whether you will openly dare go so far [as the slaveholders] in support of your claim to our funds.'§ Truly modest. Again. 'Now, is there no morality, or rather immorality, in snatching the children's bread, left by their fathers, and giving it to strangers?' Once more. 'You, and others associated with you, may rest contented (so far as I am concerned') [thank you] 'to feed on another's bread, till conscience and a sense of duty may lead you to relinquish our funds, with interest, to the First Church of Christ in Scituate and the Society connected with it.' A person ought to have strong grounds for such language as this.‖ After this great display of modesty and unassuming meekness on your part, I am constrained to say, as appears by records, First.—the First Church, as such, never exercised or had any control, management, or direction whatever of the funds,¶ as they would have done had they owned them; and never

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* Did Rev. Mr. Keith advise to send this lad into 'hopeless slavery?' I do not know, and I believe history does not inform us, but that *his* advice *was* to 'educate' the child, and 'form his mind as they chose.'

† Yes, truly, both sophistry and a false statement, as now fully appears.

‡ Not 'sold to hopeless slavery.'

§ It now appears that my doubts were well founded; no such claim is pretended in what follows.

‖ And most surely we have 'strong grounds.'

¶ Then the Rev. Mr. Deane has made *another* 'false statement,' or my correspondent has made one! Mr. Deane says, in his 'History,' (p. 33,) that 'the farm was given to the Church. The same year (1654) the Church entered into negotiation with Mr. Chauncy, and, as appears, had so much encouragement, that they should prevail over his inclination to leave them, that a deed of the farm was made to Mr. Chauncy, and put upon record. He however left them at the close of 1654. We have seen no writings on record, by which the farm was then relinquished to the

claimed them, or thought of claiming them, so far as is known, until after

Church, and by the Church to the Society, but such relinquishments, we understand, were made.' Also, 'in 1661, Mr. Hatherly gave his house and land at Farm Neck, 'for the use of the ministry.' To whom? Mr. Deane also says, in his 'History,' (p. 175,) 'In 1654, Mr. Hatherly, the untiring patron of the plantation, offered to make a deed of gift to Mr. Chauncy, of a house and land on "Satuit Brook," on condition that Mr. Chauncy agreed to spend his life in Scituate, which offer he declined. Mr. Hatherly then makes the deed *to the Church*, and submits the farm *to their disposal*. The same year the Church conveys it to Mr. Chauncy, by deed of gift, signed probably by most of the male members, namely, Timothy Hatherly, Thomas Chittenden,' and eighteen others. 'Though this was given without any condition to be performed on Mr. Chauncy's part, at least, specified in the deed, yet, on his retiring at the close of the same year, the farm seems to have been relinquished *to the Church*.' Some things here appear very loosely stated, and need investigation; but taking the account as here given, either Mr. Deane or Col. Turner has made a false statement; which of the two, I leave for others to decide.

The following facts, however, may be here stated: 'From 1631 till 1662, none were entitled to the right of suffrage, or could be chosen or appointed to any office, who were not members of some regularly established church.' 'By a law in 1668, it was ordered and declared, that "by the church is meant such as are in full communion only," and all others are prohibited from voting at their elections.' 'In 1646, the *number* of those not connected with the churches in Massachusetts and Plymouth,' is represented by 'thousands.' In these days, parishes, as such, did not exist, except as churches. But 'the churches exercised parochial authority. They had similar corporate powers to those which parishes now exercise.' They 'built and owned the first meeting-houses,' and 'had the power of raising money by tax for the support of their pastors.' 'Those that were no members were taxed to maintain the minister of the place they belonged unto.' 'In the act of 1641, respecting the gathering of churches, no mention is made of their being connected with parishes or towns. In the acts of 1642, 1646, and 1658, all in one way or another respecting churches, we find no mention made of parishes or towns.' 'In 1665, some modification took place as to the civil powers of the inhabitants, but still under close restrictions, as to certificates of character,' &c. 'It does not appear that any others voted (except church members) respecting the settlement of ministers, till after the Provincial charter in 1691.' 'In the celebrated act of 1754, at least, in that part of it which relates to church property, no mention is made of parishes or towns; and

the 'eleven' joined the Church. 'Our funds!'* Secondly,— the First Parish, as such, *bought* part of the funds,† and, from the earliest times, always

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in those acts of the colonial and provincial legislatures, which do speak of the connection between church and town or parish, this connection is spoken of merely as matter of fact, and not as one of necessity to the church. We might quite as well infer from these laws generally, that a town or parish cannot subsist without a church, as that a church cannot subsist unless connected with some town or parish.'

From the above quotations it will appear, that, at the time the donations were made to the Church in Scituate, by Messrs. Hatherly and Chauncy, there was in existence no Parish or incorporated Society, distinct from the Church, except the town corporation. If these funds, therefore, were given to any *body corporate*, separate from the town, (and none will pretend they were given to *the town*,) they must have been given to *the Church*, and been managed by the Church, at least for a time. Churches have remained bodies corporate from that time to the present, as may be seen from all the *acts* passed on the subject, including the present revised statute. (See p. 76.) There has been no necessity for the Church in Scituate to put her funds into the hands of the Parish, and we have seen no writings, nor does Mr. Deane mention any, by which the Church relinquished Mr. Hatherly's donations (especially that of 1661) to the Parish. With regard to the former, he says, 'we have seen no writings, but we understand,' &c. This authority is as good here, as in regard to the history of 'The Separation;' being the same.

But I may here remark, further, that if there were a formal or informal relinquishment (of the management?) of these funds into the hands of the Parish, was it not with the implied, if not written proviso, that they should be sacredly appropriated to the support of Calvinistic preaching? (All the Congregational churches were then Calvinistic.) If so, (and who can doubt that this proviso was implied, if not written,) what does true righteousness demand of this Society? Evidently the moral, and therefore the highest claim, with men who fear God rather than man, lies with the Church.

* While they were faithfully managed in accordance with the wishes of the donors and the Church, there was no occasion for complaint. But when the latter saw the great perversion of these funds, it was *the time* to raise their voice in reproof. They could not feel that they were honest men, if they saw in silence the funds left by their pious ancestors perverted to overthrow, if possible, the faith and Church which those holy men had cherished. If such things are to be allowed and *justified*, truly may we exclaim with Cicero; 'O tempora! O mores!'

† 'Bought part of the funds!' probably as Mr. Deane says:

possessed, managed, and controlled them, — sold and gave deeds, from time to time, as the money was wanted for parish purposes. 'Our funds!' You might just as well claim the Bank of England as 'our funds.'*

But you say the funds were left by Trinitarians, — you are Trinitarians, therefore they are yours. Why these funds, more than any others, left by Trinitarians in the State? And why do you take this one particular tenet as the one to give you a title? There were others considered by our ancestors equally important, many of them so nice that I cannot quote them, without turning to history, and which Calvinists of the present day do not believe.

Mr Deane, in his 'History,' says, 'The first settlers of Scituate were men of intelligence and education.' They were, then, doubtless, of the opinion of the worthy Robinson, as expressed to the Pilgrims in his farewell sermon, when they were about to leave Holland for America. Said he, 'I charge you before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed Churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will, at present, go no further than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times; yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech you, remember it, — 't is an article of your church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God.' With such views, probably, the part of the funds left by individuals were given, and the donors, if now living, would rejoice to receive the 'more truth,' which 'has broke out of his Holy Word.'†

'In 1701, they sold all the lands which they owned, as successor to Mr. Chauncy, and built a barn on the parsonage, with the proceeds,' &c. 'Mr. Hatherly and the Conihasset partners had given Mr. Chauncy a share in the undivided Conihasset lands; and this share was relinquished to the Church and Society.'— (Deane's *History*, pp. 33, 34.)

* It is believed there are many candid and honest Unitarians in Massachusetts, who frown indignantly upon this wholesale robbery of funds, belonging to Orthodox churches, and who would sincerely rejoice to have justice take place.

† 'The more truth;' Unitarianism, of course; and Parkerism, and Socialism, and open Infidelity, and what not!! What justice or confidence can be placed in such a principle of interpretation? 'The donors, if now living, would rejoice,' (would they?) to embrace and support a system of religious faith 'so diametrically opposite' to their own! (The Pilgrims are still represented by nearly fifteen hundred Orthodox Congregational churches, in New England alone.) This is not so easy a thing for good, honest, pious men to do! Their principles and spirit lie too deep within, for so complete a reverse. Such changes are easier for those who look chiefly at externals. But my correspondent cannot speak in too high terms of *our* 'worthy Robinson.' He was, indeed 'ahead of the age in which he lived,' though he saw not, approvingly, the peculiar tenets of Unitarianism. The advice he

As to the 'majority.' You come out with two certificates, procured since you commenced the roll of nine sheets, the signers of which avow them-

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gave, as quoted above, was excellent — has been remembered, and, we believe, *prudently* followed by his own denomination. They have dropped some of those unessential, nice tenets, which, as 'Calvinists of the present day,' they 'do not believe.' But it is taking too great liberties to suppose, that if Robinson, and Hatherly, and Chauncy, were now alive, they would be good Unitarians, or followers of Rev. Mr. Parker!

'The first settlers of Scituate were men of intelligence and education.' Very true. Then they must have been acquainted with the peculiar sentiments of Arius, and Pelagius, and Socinus, and others, who espoused the principal doctrines of modern Unitarianism. But these doctrines they discarded as heretical, and subversive of the gospel; embracing views, on these points, 'diametrically opposite.' But few will admit, that the great and peculiar principles of Unitarianism, are quite as modern as my correspondent seems to imply. Why, then, should the funds they left be appropriated to the very subversion of the fundamental articles of their 'intelligent' faith? It is 'ridiculous' and almost insupportable, to hear modern Unitarians, as we often do, claiming such men as Robinson, and Chauncy, and many others of our early ancestors, as good Unitarians, or 'would be such,' if living in 'these enlightened times.' But the climax of provocation is superadded, when the legacies of such men are assumed and expended for Unitarian support! This is a sacrilege and profanation of the ashes of the pious dead, not to be endured. The reader will also here notice how my correspondent employs the same artifice himself, which he so unjustly charges upon the Orthodox, (in introducing Rev. Mr. Nott's case,) using an opposite doctrine, when it 'better subserves their purpose.' In one part of the Correspondence, he will 'not admit,' 'that decrees of assemblies of divines of this age, and this stamp, are entitled to the least consideration;' but before he closes, it is repeatedly 'the worthy Robinson,' — 'the first settlers of Scituate were men of intelligence and education,' — 'doubtless of the opinion of the worthy Robinson,' &c., — 'the donors (of the funds), if now living, would rejoice to receive the "more truth,"' &c.

But 'why — take this one particular tenet — Trinitarianism?' By referring to our 'Manual' and the Correspondence, it will be seen we often use the double expression of 'Trinitarian and Calvinistic,' a somewhat broader basis, and sufficiently distinct and descriptive of our denomination, as contrasted with Unitarianism. But further, this 'one tenet,' as it is called, involves several others, if not my whole catalogue, 'commencing with "total depravity," and ending with "the absolute eternity of future pun-

selves to be Trinitarians. To one of them you are welcome.* Mr. Vinal was a worthy man. I was often at his house, before he went to the almshouse, and before his mind was impaired, and never heard any one of the liberal party express themselves so strongly on church matters, against the course pursued by the seceding party, as I have heard him. Since then, as I am informed, his mind is, in a measure, gone, and he, perhaps, would sign almost any certificate you wanted.† I took numbers from your 'Manual,'

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ishment;"' for the more intelligent will perceive, that a denial of the Trinity is the denial of Christ's supreme divinity, and the atonement made by his sufferings and death. This almost necessarily leads to the denial of total depravity, which includes the necessity of regeneration; and when these doctrines are all laid aside, the eternity of future punishment is easily doubted, if not absolutely denied. Justification by faith alone, the great doctrine of the Reformation as well as of *the New Testament*, is also completely set aside by the above rejections; and when we get thus far, the step to Parkerism is short, and then easy to Socialism and open Infidelity! This is not mere declamation, but follows legitimately from the premises, as shown by various writers and by common observation. Not a few, having abandoned revelation, and trusting to their own darkened understandings, have gone this whole length in error, while others, having seen the abyss into which they were about to plunge, have shrunk back, some we hope upon *terra firma*, but others still stand upon the trembling quagmire, that close surrounds the pit.

'Facilis descensus Averni:
Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis:
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est.' VIRGIL.

Our moral and just claim, then, either as Trinitarians, or as Trinitarians and Calvinists, is sufficiently broad and distinct. But 'why these funds, more than any others left by Trinitarians in the State?' For the plain reason, that these were left to the First Church of Christ in *Scituate*, and not to that in Dedham, or elsewhere!

* We hope, then, that he will be no longer counted with the minority.

† And perhaps *not*. Hear the following testimony, from the most credible authority: — 'This may certify, that I have been intimately acquainted with Mr. Simeon Vinal from his earliest years, and can say, that from the time of his making a public profession of religion, [July, 1823,] he has sustained a fair moral and religious character. From repeated conversation with him, personally, in regard to the Separation and Church difficulties in 1825, I believe and feel assured, that he was friendly to the

supposing it correct, in that particular; which, if these certificates are to be relied on, appears not to be the case.* But, to make this matter short, as I have other things to notice, and do not intend to cover nine sheets, I say that, even if I admit the certificates, your plural, in your preface, should give place to the singular. Instead of 'two or three' false statements, you make no attempt to sustain more than one.†

I should understand, from the general tenor of your communication, that churches and church members were about the only subjects worthy of note in this world. 'Parishes and societies are something *added*, not the original

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major part of the Church which seceded, and approved of their action in this respect. Soon after the Separation I met with Mr. Vinal, and he inquired particularly as to our prosperity and prospects. and said that he intended to join us after we had obtained a settled Pastor. Both before and after the separation, he frequently attended Calvinistic preaching, and appeared gratified with such instruction. The probable reason why he did not fully join with us, I have always believed, was owing to domestic difficulties, and a measure of *dependence* on others. I have frequently seen Mr. Vinal in later years, and once within a very few weeks, and have noticed no particular failure in his memory or other faculties, above what is common to most men of his years, [about 75.] In my late visit he seemed to relate circumstances and events, which transpired years ago, with propriety and accuracy. I will here also say, that I have heard read attentively the above Correspondence and Notes, prepared for the press by Rev. Mr. Wight, and can testify that his statements, so far as they relate to the Separation, funds, &c., are correct, according to the best of my information and recollection, and that I cordially approve of their publication. ELEAZAR PEAKES.

'Scituate, Dec. 19th, 1844.'

* Most certainly it can. The numbers, however, given in the 'Manual,' were there given for another purpose: to establish the majority in Mr. Thomas's dismission; not in adopting the covenant, — two very different acts. But it is immediately added, that 'several more of this minority withdrew soon after;' and in my second letter, (page 11,) that they 'united with Trinitarian churches.'

† Most certainly I do. I relinquished discussion on the *third* false statement only, as will be clearly seen by referring to the letters. The first and second, as examined on both sides, and numbered first and secondly, are distinct and well defined. The third was relinquished, not that I yielded its falsity, but because it was considered as 'immaterial, and unworthy of dispute;' and also, because that we both agreed that the secession took place in April, 1825, but which the paragraph under examination represents as taking place 'at that time,' namely, 'in A. D. 1824.'

root.'* I cannot, myself, think that church membership, without the practice of the Christian virtues, is very valuable. If I am a member of a church, and am deficient in love and charity, — fail in my duties to my fellow-men and to my God, will church membership save me? Or, suppose I believe in all the articles named in your roll, commencing with 'total depravity,' and ending with 'the absolute eternity of future punishment!' and was otherwise a suitable person for a church member, should offer myself to your Church, and they, by a major vote, reject me, would this vote exclude me from heaven? Far be it from me to discourage any one who, from a sense of duty, or as a means of greater purity of life, wishes to join a church; but, for myself, I cannot but think that substance is more than form, — the practice of the Christian virtues more than the profession only.†

You are much mistaken, in supposing me prejudiced against those who differ from me, 'especially if ministers.' Be sure, I do not think that the study of divinity and being ordained as a minister makes *more* than a man of any one; but I could name some ministers of the Baptists, whom I highly esteemed, and have the vanity to think I stood well in their estimation; and some of your predecessors — one, in particular — stood very high in my opinion as a man and a Christian. I used, occasionally, to attend his meetings, and, although he was strictly a Calvinist, had love and charity for others, — firmly, but charitably, maintained his doctrines, but did not condemn others; did not call himself 'the faithful,' or think himself infallible,‡ like his Holiness of Rome, — was in every respect, as I thought, a most worthy man.

I have not noticed your wholesale condemnation of me, personally.§ A bigoted Catholic priest might, and probably would, do the same by you, because you differ from him in a few particulars; but would *his* condemnation harm *you?* I might, also, retort, and refer you to Luke, 18: 11, 12, and say, 'I fear' you are there described. I might advise you to read

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* Very true, as before shown. And if I do place the Church of Christ as a very *prominent* thing in this world, I fear not the reproach. Matt. 6: 33. Ps. 87: 2, 3, &c.

† Quite a cool and deliberate self-justification for living in neglect of some of the plainest commands of Scripture! Acts 2: 38. Luke 22: 19. Matt. 10: 32, 33. 1 Cor. 11: 23–29, &c.

‡ There are some shades of difference between the terms 'faithful' and 'infallible.' See Eph. 1: 1. Col. 1: 2. 1 Tim. 1: 12, &c.

§ This sentence is wholly unjustified by any language I have used in respect to my correspondent, as may be seen by referring to what I have written. It seems designed merely for effect. I have said, indeed, that he 'seemed to be one of those described in 1 Cor. 2: 14;' and that 'I feared, unless he changed his course and spirit, he would be found at last to have been fighting against God and his people;' and with what propriety, I leave others to judge. But there is no 'personal condemnation' in this. If I go astray, as I am sensible I often do, and another shall admonish me in similar terms, I hope I shall not complain, but receive the admonition thankfully, and improve by it.

the Sermon on the Mount, and ask if you possess the virtues there inculcated, or, in your own phraseology, 'fear' you do not possess them? I might inquire of you, if *your* Bible contains the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, and, if it does, whether you ever read it?* But I will do no such thing. To your own Master you stand or fall. I am not your judge.

You say, 'It is no new thing for evil-doers to charge severity upon the faithful, because they declare unto them their sins.' 'At such times, nothing is more common than to claim for themselves a large share of liberality and charity'.† Now, Sir, in no part of the religious exercises conducted by the truly worthy, and, I believe, truly good man, whose ministry I attend, can I more sincerely join, than in his prayers for 'our fellow-Christians worshipping by our sides.' Not 'errorists,' or any other bad epithet, but 'our fellow-Christians.'‡ If this makes an evil-doer, I am one.

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* I had said, 'You may trifle with such suggestions now,' &c., and my correspondent has here very genteely taken the permission.

† All this has, doubtless, often been verified.

‡ Though 'gross idolaters' and what not, it is all alike, 'our fellow-Christians!' No matter, evidently, what a man believes, provided he be sincere! With some he is still 'our fellow-Christian,' though he deny the Bible, and even the Lord that made him! Rev. Theodore Parker, of Roxbury is still, I believe, a member of the Unitarian Association, and has exchanged pulpits with his brother ministers, since his notorious South Boston sermon. (We also have the following recent notice of this gentleman in the Christian Reflector (Baptist) of Jan. 2d, 1845:—'Theodore Parker.—The last Thursday Lecture at Chauncy Place was delivered by Mr. Parker, whose ordination sermon at South Boston excited so much attention some two years ago. A report of it appeared next morning in the Post, and if that report was correct, we cannot see how even Unitarians can withhold expressions of grief and indignation. He preached on the character of Jesus, and conveyed the impression that his followers esteemed even him too highly. He was a good man, indeed a better man than the world had seen before, but not so good as some who may come after him. Mr. P. believes, that God has *other Christs* in store for the world, who will far surpass Jesus, or all our ideas of Jesus! Think of such blasphemy, uttered in the pulpit of the church planted in tears and prayers by the Puritan fathers of New England—the first church founded in Boston!' Says the 'N. E. Puritan,' relative to this same gentleman, 'Let it be known in all Christendom, that some of the Unitarian clergy of Boston and vicinity still exchange pulpits with Mr. Parker, and allow him to preach the Thursday Lecture, and in various ways uphold him in the character of a minister.') The three churches which worship by the side of the First Parish, are all Trinitarians, and worship 'Christ' as 'over all,

I should like to glance at some other remarks of yours, but have not space.*

Respectfully,

JOHN B. TURNER.

God blessed forever,' (Rom. 9: 5. Heb. 1: 6. Rev. 5: 8 – 14,) and are, of course, 'gross idolaters,' truly, (1 Cor. 5: 11; 6: 9. Rev. 21: 8; 22: 15.) if Christ be not God. I also love to pray for 'our fellow-Christians, worshipping by our sides,' and would that I could believe, with large charity, that they were still more numerous. But while I pray for fellow-Christians, I must also pray for sinners still unreconciled to God; for those who, we 'fear,' are 'rejecting the counsel of God against themselves,' and 'the stone' which 'has become the head of the corner,' (Luke, 7: 30. Matt. 21: 42. 1 Pet. 2: 6 – 8.) There is a false charity in the world, which is ruining thousands, which literally becomes 'all things to all men,' whether proper or not, and which makes nothing of principles, of faith, and of doctrine, if a tolerably fair *external* is exhibited. But we might as well attempt to build a beautiful temple with mere shingles and clapboards and paint, without framework beneath, as expect to possess and maintain the gospel of Christ, or its spirit, by mere external morality, without the fixed principles, the doctrines, of the gospel. Now true charity, or holy *love*, 'rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;' and this charity will intreat, and warn, and admonish, and even declare 'the terror of the Lord,' to persuade and save men.

* The 'nine sheets' were still in part reserved, but if the remaining 'contents' are no further from the 'proper light' than those examined, it was prudent to keep them unsoiled. Every new page adds darkness to the picture drawn, to claim Orthodox funds for Unitarian support! Just see how it appears to others abroad. 'A distinguished jurist in a neighboring State,' speaking of the Dedham case, which differs not materially from our own, and that of many others, writes as follows: —

'The Dedham case, so called, was a bold stroke. It astonished me. I first saw it merely touched in a Boston newspaper of the day; and in a letter to one of the judges, my friend, if I know a friend, and one with whom no friendship is broken, I asked whether the statement of the decision as given in the newspaper, could be correct; observing that I hoped not, for, if correct, it seemed to me "a declaration of war against evangelical churches." I wondered to hear so very little said by way of protest against it. I could not suppose that religious sentiment was "dead or asleep."'

After speaking of the published Result of an Ecclesiastical Council at Groton, in which the decision in question is largely

discussed, and having expressed his satisfaction with that discussion, the writer proceeds : —

'If I were to find a truth, which might have been better edged and pointed, it would be the concession made in the Dedham case, that "there may undoubtedly be donations *to a church*," to which "the parish would have no claim," such as furniture for the communion table, &c., in which case it is certain, that *no person but the church* could have a claim. This concession, which the court had not the courage and the conscience to controvert, cuts up by the roots the whole principle assumed, namely, that the church "could not hold as a corporation." This assumption, to my understanding, ever appeared to be the whole foundation of the decision; the rest of the case (being 34 pages of Report) seems to be foreign remarks and declamation, tending not to discuss the subject, but to confound or evade it; and even this assumption seems, by the above concession, to be wholly abandoned.'

'The judges are great men; as such, I consider and esteem them. But we have wrong notions of great men. Mere greatness does not imply that men, because great, are more free than others from an arithmetical proportion of *errors;* but great men are great in all their parts, as an elephant is greater than a sheep. They have great thoughts, great views, great premises, great conclusions; their demonstrations are great demonstrations; their *errors* are *great* errors; and *that is the difference.*'

The judge of a neighboring State, alluding to the same Dedham case, also writes thus : — 'A church has been known as a body corporate from the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth; was recognized and confirmed as such by the earliest statutes; was by the law of 1754, which the court copiously quote, expressly empowered, among other things, "to call the deacons to account" respecting their property, "and if need be commence and prosecute any suits touching the same." It is not shown, that at any time churches have failed to hold property, nor that the right has been doubted.' He closes by saying, 'It is hoped the court will have opportunity to reconsider the decision, if that course is better than a correction by the Legislature.'

The Revised Statute, in regard to churches as bodies corporate, is as follows : — 'The deacons, church-wardens, or other similar officers of all churches, or religious societies, if citizens of the United States, shall be deemed bodies corporate, for the purpose of taking and holding in succession all grants and donations, whether of real or personal estate, made either to them and their successors, or to their respective churches, or to the poor of their churches.' Revis. Stat. Part I, Title 8, chap. 20, sec. 39.

The following is a quotation from a writer in England, published in the 'Eclectic Review' for October, 1830. It shows that

the opinions and state of things there, are not very unlike what they are among us, in some respects. This reviewer observes: — 'But the pittance on which the children of the Unitarian minister starves has been filched for him; his income, or three fourths of it, is the fruit of fraud, the shameless perversion of a testamentary grant. Every shilling, if he be a man of sensibility, must burn his palm as he takes it. The thirty, sixty, hundred pounds per annum, which, if it be not the whole of his salary, is that on which his continuance in his place absolutely depends, was destined by the donor for the maintenance of a doctrine, which the man who receives it is always *laboring to impugn!* Odious position! hard service! The minister who stands in a pulpit under such conditions, might well, as he glances at the tablet dedicated to the memory of the abused dead, imagine that he hears the "stone out of the wall" uttering the reproachful taunt, "He who eateth of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me!"'

But further quotations and arguments are unnecessary. It is believed, that the candid and impartial reader of the foregoing Correspondence and Notes will be prepared to decide, first, that the charge of 'false statements made in the history of the town,' has been sustained; secondly, that Rev. Mr. Thomas was regularly and truly dismissed as Pastor of the First Church in Scituate, in April, 1825; thirdly, that those who dismissed him and their successors are ecclesiastically the First Church of Christ in Scituate; (this will follow, if the dismission of Mr. Thomas was real;) and, fourthly, that the said First Church has the civil, ecclesiastical, and moral claim to the ancient church-records down to April 29th, 1825, (although we have been and are denied the privilege of even looking at them,) with the church plate, and all other exclusive church property then in their possession. Also, that this same Church, and the Society now connected with it, have the moral (if not legal) claim to at least such portion of the original funds as came through the liberality of Mr. Timothy Hatherly and Rev. Charles Chauncy. These were men of Orthodox faith, whose creed covered every article and essential idea in our present Confession of Faith as received by this Church, and which we have seen is 'so diametrically opposite' to that system, in support of which it is now applied. These were 'men of intelligence and education,' who intelligently rejected the then well known principles of Unitarianism, as before shown, and who could not, therefore, have *designed* their legacies for the overthrow of their own faith, and the support of an 'opposite.' How can honest men, who hold that righteousness is 'the central principle' of their system, consistently and knowingly make such a perversion of funds, and continue to justify such conduct? If there are other funds, raised by the town or parish, as such, inde-

pendent of the above donations, we lay no wholesale claim to such funds. They may still continue with the First Parish, if that be just, or be divided among the different Societies which now cover the original territory, if that be more just. But, if my opponent and his associates can hold on upon their 'central principle,' and also upon 'our funds,' — records, plate, and all, — and that too with a good conscience, I will only say, — hold on, but 'fear!'

A

SECOND SERIES OF LETTERS

CONCERNING

THE HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST PARISH IN SCITUATE.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
M DCCC XLV.

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PREFACE.

According to the Constitution and Laws of the Commonwealth, the Church in the First Parish and the First Church in the place wherein that Parish lies, are identical. Those who withdraw from the First Parish remove also by that act from the First Church, and leave the privileges and rights of property belonging to the members of the body they have forsaken, behind them. Just as seceders from a town leave behind the body politic with its powers and immunities undiminished, however large the proportion of those seceding may be.

Such is the doctrine of the Constitution and the Laws under which all our religious societies hold their rights and privileges. It is not for any particular society or individual to complain of, or to vindicate this principle, with its accompanying rules, but to abide by them in obedience. The First Church and Parish in Scituate, among the oldest in New England, have recently been assailed with some asperity, for no other cause than that they continue to be what they always were and what they must be, *first*, among the many societies occupying the same ground, and to use their rights as such, under the sanction of the Law and Constitution.

The following pages arose from this assault, and have relation to it. The "Correspondence" which is here republished, was at first printed by one of the parties, without the knowledge or consent of the other. It is given now in a form more convenient, and free from the incumbrances which were attached to it before, so as to be read clearly and judged fairly. What is added was necessary to meet the demand occasioned by the Notes which abound in the original publication, and to lay before the reader the statements which must be regarded candidly, in order to make up a just opinion upon the subjects to which they relate.

This appeal to the community is made with no other desire, than to make known the whole truth in a matter which was supposed, and is now believed, to have been settled twenty years ago, but which was brought into notice again by a person, who was three years since a stranger in the place, and whose means of information and qualifications for determining the questions of

which he speaks, cannot be considered the best. A correct historical account of the ecclesiastical affairs in Scituate was given in the History of the Town, by the late Rev. Samuel Deane, for many years the esteemed pastor of the Second Church and Society. He possessed every facility for collecting materials, and all the disposition to use them well, which any one now could be expected to have. Much of what is contained in the narrative of modern date fell under Mr. Deane's own observation, and was that which his near residence and intimacy with the persons and things concerned in it must needs have qualified him to report with some confidence. His account corresponds with the Parish and Church Records, with the common impressions and remembrances of the people in Scituate at large, and with the indelible convictions of those who themselves took part in the affairs of our religious society, at the period when the small body of Orthodox professors seceded from it.

The forbearance and charitable purpose which have ever distinguished the First Church and Parish in their relations to the Trinitarian Society in Scituate, have been construed by Rev. Daniel Wight, into a disposition to evade the light, as evil doers are wont. Because we have so long allowed the name which belongs only to us, to be used by another body of our fellow Christians, at their pleasure, he seems to imagine we felt deficient in our title to it. And from our manifest desire to maintain concord and promote good will towards all around us, he would appear to infer a disregard to truth, or a sense of former injustice. These mistakes cannot harm us. We are well assured that we stand upon ground not to be shaken. But we shall still be most happy to render this conducive in the highest degree to the interests of religion, and the welfare of all our brethren in Christ.

The commencement of this controversy was in the Church Manual by Rev. Daniel Wight. It closes here. We are fixedly determined by no provocation to be driven to resume it. Our case is a just one. Our characters are not now, we are happy to believe, in need of any support which could be afforded by defending ourselves against new attacks, of the same description as those we have noticed in the present publication. The bitterness and rancor which are engendered by such controversy are sufficient to deter us from any more participation in it.

THE

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

HON. JOHN B. TURNER AND REV. DANIEL WIGHT, JR.

Scituate, August 21, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: In the preface of a 'Church Manual,' prepared, I suppose, by you, and lately published, I find the following: 'The occasion of this long unsettled dispute has doubtless arisen from ignorance of these facts, in connection with *false statements* made in the history of the town.'

Not being able to find any 'false statements' in Mr. Deane's 'History of Scituate,' on the subject of 'The Separation,' I respectfully request you to point them out to me in writing.

Mr. Deane was a resident in Scituate as a minister of the gospel at the time, and, many years before and after the separation, must have been familiar with all the facts in the case; and if 'false statements' are made on that subject, they must have been made knowingly, a crime of which I have heretofore thought Mr. Deane incapable; but if you will point them out, so that I can find them, however much I may be pained by so total a change of opinion respecting the character of Mr. Deane, I will join with you in condemning the falsehoods, and in making them public.

The charge of making 'false statements' is a grave charge, deeply affecting the moral character of the person making them—entirely destroying his character as a Christian and a gentleman; and no Christian or gentleman ought to make this charge against another, without being able to point out the reasons therefor.

With great respect,

JOHN B. TURNER.

Scituate, August 24, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: I received yesterday, through the post-office, a communication from you, requesting me to point out in writing, certain 'false statements,' alleged by me to be found in Rev. Mr. Deane's 'History of Scituate,' in regard to 'The Separation.'

On receiving this communication, I prepared a somewhat full reply; but on further reflection, must beg the privilege of withholding it for the present, as I understand a *reply* is to be made to our 'Church Manual,' in which this charge is found. We had repeatedly solicited * the privilege of consulting the ancient records of our Church, now in the hands of Rev. E. Q. Sewall, but were denied the privilege, after one very brief perusal, on the ground, 'it was feared we were about to publish something to the *injury* of a party concerned, and they did not wish to assist us by furnishing *facts*.' This was the reason, substantially, as near as I can recollect. We now say, that we do not wish to furnish materials for the forthcoming reply, which may, with more propriety, be reserved till *after* that reply shall appear. I will say, however, that the 'charge' respecting 'false statements' was not made without deliberation, and I stand ready to point them out (as I think I can do to the satisfaction of every candid, unprejudiced mind), as soon as the anticipated reply shall be published. Or, if I have been misinformed in respect to such a reply being published, and you will inform me as to this fact, I will forward my now reserved communication immediately.

Yours truly, with great respect,

DANIEL WIGHT, JR.

Scituate, August 27, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: I received yours of the 24th, last Saturday evening, and in reply can answer, that, so far as I know and believe, no reply is intended to your 'Church Manual.' My own feelings in that respect are, that if you truly and sincerely believe your services will be more acceptable to God by claiming to be the *first* Church, or even the *only* Church, I have no wish to dispute either or both; but should you make the claim from motives of pride or vanity—the *honor* of being called the first Church or only Church—you might be easily met on either claim. As I cannot think you make the claim from the latter motives, I pass the subject.

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* This request was, with regret, declined a second time, for the reason, implied but not expressed, that a suspicion had arisen as to the designs of those who sought access to our Records. It was feared, that they who claimed our name would keep our book, and oblige us to sue for it by a legal process.

I thought, on reading your preface, that, unless you had found something in Mr. Deane's 'History of Scituate,' more than had met my eye, you had made an assertion you ought not to have done, to the injury of his moral character, and disreputable to his memory, which I fondly cherish, having been on terms of friendship (and, considering our different walks in life), I might even say intimacy with him when living. I cannot feel willing that his character or memory should be injured without sufficient cause. This induced me to write to you, and not, as your letter would seem to imply, that I am one of a conspiracy to draw something from you to be used to the injury of your Society. So far am I from this, that, could I promote the good of your Society, without injury to others, I would do it with as much alacrity as I granted a warrant for its organization.

With great respect,

JOHN B. TURNER.

Scituate, Aug. 23, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: I have just received your communication, inquiring into the truth or falsity of a certain charge, made by me in the preface to our 'Church Manual,' respecting 'false statements made in the history of the town,' touching the subject of 'The Separation.'

If I have been led to make a false charge, I can assure you it was wholly unintentional, and when it shall be pointed out and *established*, I hope I shall be willing to acknowledge the crime, and repent of it. What I have written in respect to this subject has been written with deliberation, and I trust with candor, not to *injure* any individual or body of individuals, but to *benefit*. It is in this aspect I view your own communication. It is not truth, but error, which injures mankind. Truth is 'a pearl of great price,' and should you convince me of error, and lead me to see the truth, I should still feel that *I* had gained an important victory, as well as *you*. The truth — not error — will bear investigation. I rejoice that any are disposed to examine the subject proposed in your letter, and thank you, dear Sir, most heartily, for your kind attention and inquiry.

I will here simply state, that in our 'Manual,' we did not wish to assume a *controversial* aspect, though necessity was laid upon us to do so in some degree; we might have said much more, but this desire restrained us. Hence, we did not point out more definitely those 'false statements' referred to. But, at your request, I now cheerfully point them out, as I find them presented to me in authentic records, made at the time, by persons acting in those scenes which they describe. Being eyewitnesses of what they

record, I must believe their united testimony to be true, even in preference to that of the Rev. Mr. Deane, who was not an eye-witness (as I suppose); at least, I must believe them true till clearly shown to be false by satisfactory evidence.

You will find the 'false statements,' to which I more particularly referred, on page 58 of Mr. Deane's 'History,' in the following paragraph:

'In A. D. 1824, a number of persons in the First Church and Society, became desirous to introduce a Church Covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity; but not having a majority of the Church, and having less than one fourth of the Parish, which were ready to favor their views at that time, they seceded, and formed a new Society.'

If I can rely on the authentic 'Records,' referred to above, I think I can show at least *two*, if not *three* 'false statements,' in this one paragraph.

First, it is said, 'A number of persons in the First Church and Society became desirous to *introduce* a Church Covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity,' &c. This was not the fact, if our 'Records' are true. The covenant, here referred to, was adopted, word for word, by this same First Church, March 12, 1710–11; and, at the time referred to, *this Church had already stood on that covenant* for more than a century. Furthermore, this same Church actually *renewed* this covenant at a church meeting, regularly notified by the Pastor, and over which he presided in person, Feb. 6, 1825. At an adjourned meeting, the Church also '*voted*, That the Rev. Mr. Thomas be requested to transcribe *the covenant* found on the old church book on the present church book.' That covenant I have seen on the *old records*, and this is the very covenant on which our Church now stands, as renewed Feb. 6, 1825.*

It appears, that this covenant had been, for a time, neglected by their then present Pastor, and that the Church regarded themselves in a 'loose state,' both in regard to their *Covenant* and *Confession of Faith*. Feeling this to be their condition, 'a large majority of the Church' signed a communication to the Pastor, requesting him to appoint a meeting for the purpose of investigating this subject. They were led to examine the 'Records,' and

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* There is no evidence, that the Rev. Mr. Thomas *ever used* what he is here spoken of as neglecting. He has left on record the Covenant he *did* use, and under which *all* the Church then existing were united together. It is believed, that the very existence of the older document was a recent discovery, or had been long forgotten, if it had ever been known. Were not the members who made difficulty with the Rev. Mr. Dawes and the Church, in his day, as solicitous for Church order, as their Calvinistic successors? But they made no attempt to renew this ancient Covenant, as the Records show.

'having found an old covenant on the church records, on which this Church had stood for more than a century, to which some of the brethren wished to pay further attention, it was therefore voted to adjourn said meeting to the 25th of December.' See 'Manual,' for proceedings and results.

Now I ask, in view of all the facts, does Mr. Deane's 'History' give a correct view of the subject? Would not an impartial and candid reader suppose, from his statement, that the Church had previously been Unitarian, from time immemorial; at least, that it had not been Trinitarian; and now, for the first time, some few, — 'a number,' — wished for some innovation, to introduce something new, namely, a church covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity? I ask, in all candor, if such be not the representation, — if such be not the natural impression, from reading Mr. Deane's statement, — and I ask if it be not *false?* Was not this a Trinitarian Church when established, in 1634? Again, in 1710–11, when our present church covenant was adopted; and again, in February, 1825, when that covenant was *renewed*, word for word? And did not this same Trinitarian Church secede from the old Society, in April, 1825? If so, are we not still not only the First *Trinitarian* Church of Christ in Scituate, but the *First Church* in Scituate? I do not ask for civil law to decide such a question, but do not the facts, the Bible, and common sense so decide?

Secondly. Mr. Deane says, 'But not having a majority of the Church, — which were ready to favor their views,' &c. As we have seen, the Trinitarian covenant was regularly *renewed* and adopted by the Church more than two months previous to the secession. Could it have been thus renewed and adopted, without a majority acting in its favor? Or is it said, only a part of the Church was present? I am not aware that this was the fact; but, if so, why was not another meeting called, and the vote reconsidered? Indeed, other meetings were called, and confirmed that vote. It is most evident, that *a clear majority of the Church* were in favor of the old covenant, — not a new one introduced, — both from the fact, that a majority acted in favor of Mr. Thomas's dismission, and that several others of the minority soon after withdrew and united with Trinitarian churches. Again, I ask, in view of these facts, if it be *true*, that they had not 'a majority of the Church,' 'which were ready to favor their views at that time?' Then is Mr. Deane's statement false.

Thirdly. The secession and formation of the new Society is represented as taking place at that time, namely, in 1824, but which did *not* till April, 1825. This I know is immaterial, but is nevertheless a false statement.

I now ask, in conclusion, if I had not strong reasons for the charge I have made? I know it is a 'grave charge,' and one I

would not make for my right hand, without just cause in my own mind. I know I may be mistaken, — I was not on the ground, as you say Rev. Mr. Deane was, but the testimony is clear and abundant, both from written documents and from numerous persons with whom I am acquainted, and whom I must regard as persons of truth, till proved false. You are aware, Dear Sir, that there is prejudice, and there is interest, connected with this subject. Why can we not speak out the convictions of the heart? It will, it must, all one day be disclosed, — to our shame, if we hide the light, — to our honor, if we stand by the truth. As the Pastor of this Church, I cannot but feel interested in its welfare, temporally as well as spiritually. The world know our wrongs, and the wrongs suffered by numerous other churches similarly situated, and the world condemn the course, though they still cling to it. They may succeed and prosper for a time, but, Sir, alas for their end! But I will not add.

You have requested of me a written reply. Shall I ask too much in requesting the same, giving your candid opinion on the subject, and especially pointing out my errors, if such you still find. I am, Dear Sir, with great respect,

Your humble servant,

DANIEL WIGHT, Jr.

P. S. — Aug. 28, 1844. The preceding pages were penned previously to the note I sent you on Saturday last, as an answer in part to your first communication. In view of your second, which I received last evening, I have a few remarks to add. And first, I will observe, I did not intend to imply in my last, that you were 'one of a (formal) conspiracy to draw something from me to be used to the injury of our Society,' but that, should such a communication have been sent, and afterward a reply be made to our 'Church Manual,' as was expected, from certain reports abroad, it would have been no very strange thing, had that communication been heard from, and perused by others than yourself, and that too without the least blame or impropriety on your part.

I have a word to say, with regard to the *motives* you suggest, as influencing me in defending our claims to the title of *First* Church of Christ in Scituate; — we have never thought, or intended to imply, that ours was the 'only church' in Scituate. I must acknowledge, that I was not a little surprised that (after an attentive perusal of our 'Church Manual') you should suggest all, or either of the motives you mention, to the neglect of the only one we have presented, and that on which, if I know my own heart, we rest our only claim, — that of truth and justice. I believe, Sir, you have entirely mistaken the character of your correspondent, if you suppose him even capable of entertaining,

for a moment, such motives as either of those you seem to insinuate. And it may not be improper here to observe, that the moral character of the living should be held sacred as well as that of the dead, till we can establish our charge, or the propriety even of insinuations. And now I have one favor to ask, if you have the time, and are disposed to grant it, namely, that, after perusing my present communications, you will do me the kindness again to peruse our 'Manual,' and point out to me in writing any erroneous statements it may contain, if such there be. I am not aware that there is such a statement in it. It was my most earnest desire and effort, to give a fair and impartial statement of well-attested facts, believing that such a statement was demanded by the existing state of feeling in our midst. If I have erred, I should be happy to learn my errors, and have them pointed out. You, or any one else, will truly show me a great kindness in so doing.

I need not add, in regard to the fact of 'false statements made in the history of the town,' as I believe those are clearly pointed out and established in the enclosed paper. I will only say, that I have no desire to injure the character or memory of the departed, but must still believe that truth and justice should prevail among the living, even though it be found necessary, however painful, to disclose even the crimes of the dead.

I remain, yours, &c.

Scituate, Sept. 3, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: Your letter of Aug. 23, and postscript of Aug. 28, came duly to hand through the post-office. I hardly know where to begin a reply, but will take your postscript first. I am sorry you should take any thing I have written as an attack upon your character. I wrote first, simply inquiring concerning Mr. Deane's 'History,' and, after receiving a letter from you, replied that I had no knowledge of a reply to your 'Church Manual,' and intended to convey an idea, that with good intentions I considered your claim of being the First Church of little consequence, — that the laws of the land would remain, be your claim what it might. I intended no offence, and can assure you that it never has been my aim, nor can I think it is my character, to cut to the right and left, amongst the characters of those who differ in opinion from me, whether living or dead.

I had no intention of reviewing your 'Manual,' as my letters to you may show; but as you request me to 'point out to you in writing any erroneous statements it may contain,' I will glance at one or two things among several which seem strange to me.

On page 6, you say 'Mr. Thomas was dismissed,' &c. Dis-

missed by whom? Not by his Church and Society, for he continued their beloved and respected pastor until his death. It must, therefore, have been done by those not belonging to his Church and Society. A certificate that they were not members of the First Parish, which includes the Church connected with it, is in the hands of the parish clerk, certifying that they had formed themselves into another Society. This is dated April 15, 1825, and it appears by your 'Manual,' that they dismissed Mr. Thomas on the 29th of April, fourteen days after they had availed themselves of the laws of the land and left the First Church and Society, and according to the same laws had no further action or control in the First Parish or the Church connected with it. They might, therefore, with as much propriety, have dismissed Mr. Flint, of Cohasset, or any other minister in the Commonwealth.

On page 14, after stating that 'they still call themselves the First Church,' you say, 'an appeal from the moral and ecclesiastical law to the civil, as a claim to this title, must be regarded as wholly futile, by all who regard the laws of God as superior to the laws of man.' Here are things asserted and implied, to which I cannot agree. That the civil law is in opposition to the law of God, and that the ecclesiastical laws are the laws of God. To this I cannot assent. Ecclesiastical laws are nothing more than the production of assemblies of divines, — decrees of councils or synods, unauthorized to enact. Assemblies composed, no doubt, of grave divines, learned ministers, and pious men, perhaps, but still fallible men, as liable to err as others, and with a spice of the domineering spirit (formerly somewhat prevalent) even more so. I will cite you two instances from the history of our country, in which I believe such men did grossly err.

When the grandson of Massasoit, — the Indian prince who received 'the pilgrims' with open arms, was always their friend in need, — fell into the hands of our ancestors, the question was, what should be done with this innocent boy of some ten or twelve years. As ministers mostly controlled, both in church and state at that time, some of them (the most learned and pious, I suppose, and perhaps the same who made your ecclesiastical laws), were applied to in the case, and by their decision, which they supported by many Scripture quotations, this unoffending child was sold to hopeless slavery in Bermuda.

The witchcraft delusion, according to history, got up and carried on by ministers, to sustain and increase their then waning power, a few years before the date of the church-covenant, you mention, and which will always be a stain on the fair name of Massachusetts, is another instance. What hand the actors in these things had in establishing your ecclesiastical laws, I do not know, but, from their reputation as leaders, probably great. Here was a series of cold-blooded murders, as I believe. They would

call a person a witch, and then hang him because they called him so. How many suffered an ignominious death, in consequence of this lust of power — this priestly ambition — I do not know, but believe some forty or fifty. 'John Proctor, who foresaw his doom, and knew from whom the danger came, sent an earnest petition, not to the governor and council, but to Cotton Mather, and the ministers.' Cotton Mather took one of the 'possessed' into his family, and from her learned many curious things of the invisible world; the most important of which was, that 'demons could not enter his study, or touch his person.' But, unfortunately for him, and others engaged with him, the doctrine that witches were common; that the study of a clergyman was a sanctuary, to which resort might be had to escape the devil; and their persons so holy, that demons could have no power over them; did not continue, if it ever became an article of religious faith. If it had, here would have been an engine of clerical power, at least, equal to the Catholic confessional.

Now you cannot but agree with me, that, in these cases, although grave and learned divines pronounced these doings strictly according to the laws of God, — produced texts of Scripture plentifully, to prove their assertions in the one case, and denounced vengeance on all who presumed to dispute them in the other, — still they were mistaken. The laws of God, and the dictates of reason and common sense, condemn the proceedings in both cases. Shall we take laws, made by such characters, as the laws of God? I cannot. The assertion, that laws prepared by such men, or any other men, are the laws of God, does not make them so, even if that assertion is made by a clergyman in a 'Church Manual.'

The human mind was, perhaps, at its lowest state of abasement, when Luther arose, — the day-star preceding the dawn. The feudal system, and long years of priestly rule, had brought it to its darkest night of degradation and superstition. Since then, it has (with temporary relapses) been continually advancing in the knowledge of truth, both civil and religious. It will continue to progress, nor can kingcraft or priestcraft prevent it. The worthy Robinson, at Leyden, (ahead of the age in which he lived,) saw this, when he enjoined it on his people not to stand still with Luther and Calvin, but to be ready to receive truth from other sources. Since the settlement of this country, one superstition after another has fallen before the progress of truth, but there is still room for further progression. It was once, in New England, gravely enacted, that 'no person should make mince-pies, under penalty of ten shillings;' that 'no woman should kiss her child on the Sabbath or fasting-day, under penalty of five shillings.' Now, no one, I believe, thinks mince-pies hurtful to the soul, whatever they may be to the body; and a mother kisses

her child on the Sabbath, without thinking she has grievously offended the God of love.

I think you must acknowledge this progress, since the time the grandson of Massasoit was sold a slave, and since the 22d of Sept. 1692, when 'Noyes, the minister of Salem,' while exulting over the dead bodies of eight innocent persons, called by him witches, cried, 'There hang eight firebrands of hell.' Now, so far am I from admitting, that decrees of assemblies of divines of this age and this stamp are the laws of God, that I do not admit they are entitled to the least consideration.

I say nothing of the moral law, for I can see no possible way it can have any bearing on the number of your church. If you say it is immoral to refuse to call it the first, because it violates the ecclesiastical laws we have been reviewing, I can say, it is more immoral to call it the first, in violation of the civil law.

Again, assertions or insinuations, that the civil laws are contrary to the laws of God, do not make them so. Human legislation is, I grant, imperfect, and inexpedient laws are sometimes made; but no legislature in Massachusetts would dare enact laws to clash with the Divine laws. Although the clergy do not now, as in the days of the Blue laws, control legislation, or guide the interpretation of the law, the cord between church and state having been severed years ago, still I cannot believe the people of Massachusetts would permit a law, manifestly contrary to the laws of God, to stand on their statute-books an instant.

The days have gone by, when the decrees of ecclesiastical councils — decrees of men authorized only to advise — will be generally received and obeyed, in opposition to the laws made and interpreted by the authorities appointed by the constitution of government. The men composing such councils, are no longer generally regarded with awe and reverence, as more than human. They now are only esteemed and loved, as their characters may be estimable and lovely. They are now regarded as friends, advisers, and instructors; not as dictators, holding the keys of heaven. And resistance to clerical or religious tyranny, is no longer thought to be rebellion against God.

This state of things is a natural consequence of the progress of knowledge. This has taught us, that the persons composing these councils are men, *only* men; and their misdeeds and failures, in any respect, may be talked of, and even judged of, in charity, without transgressing the Divine laws. When we examine their characters, as we do the characters of others, we find now and then one who will pervert the Scriptures for the vilest purposes, and denounce vengeance and woe on others, which we have the happiness of believing to be entirely harmless to those denounced.

Having already written at much greater length than I intended

when I began, and as I must of necessity notice some other matters when I answer your letter, which I shall do the first leisure time I find, I will close this.

I might notice the word 'formal,' in your postscript, but have no disposition to be captious.

My mind has lately been much engaged in a difficult reference, or I should have replied more promptly.

Respectfully,

JOHN B. TURNER.

Scituate, Sept. 7, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: I regret the necessity of being absent from town a week or two, just in the midst of our Correspondence, but previous engagements seem to render this absence unavoidable. When I return, and you shall have sent the remainder of your reply, I will avail myself of the first opportunity in noticing your communication.

Respectfully, yours,

DANIEL WIGHT, Jr.

Scituate, Sept. 7, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: You say, in your letter of August 23, 'you will find the false statements to which I more particularly referred, on page 58 of Mr. Deane's "History," in the following paragraph:' 'In A. D. 1824, a number of persons in the First Church and Society became desirous to introduce a church covenant, recognizing the doctrine of the Trinity; but not having a majority of the Church, and less than one fourth of the Parish, who were ready to favor their views at that time, they seceded, and formed a new Society.' And then you say, 'I think I can show at least *two*, if not *three*, false statements in this one paragraph.' First. 'A number of persons in the First Church and Society became desirous to introduce a church covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity.' This you say is false, because 'the covenant here referred to was adopted, word for word, by this same First Church, March 12, 1710–11.' This will hardly answer your purpose. *You* know, *I* know, and *all* know, as well as we can from common information, that, until some time after 'they became desirous of introducing a covenant,' they had no knowledge of the existence of any such thing. Their proceedings and views, until 'it was found on the old book,' were the same as though no covenant existed. Take your own version of the affair: 'They were dissatisfied with their loose state, with respect to their covenant.' That

is, they knew of no covenant, and wanted one. 'Having found an old covenant.' It would not have been a thing 'found,' had they known of it before, even had it been on the 'old book *two centuries*.' 'The Trinitarian covenant was regularly renewed and adopted more than two months,' &c. They would not have done this, had they not desired to adopt a 'covenant recognizing the doctrine of the Trinity.' The word *renewed* is not applicable, until they knew of something to *renew*. Your version then is, 'they were desirous to adopt a covenant recognizing the doctrine of the Trinity.' You say *adopt;* Mr. Deane says *introduce;* another might say *establish*. Whether the words adopt, introduce, or establish, had been used by Mr. Deane, three quarters of the community, including myself, would have understood precisely the same thing. I cannot see difference enough to warrant trampling on the ashes of the dead, or indeed any difference at all. If Mr. Deane's statement is false, I do not see but yours must be false also. But, according to my recollection of the transactions, the statement gathered from your letter, as made out above, is correct.

You ask, 'would not an impartial and candid reader suppose, from his statement, that the Church had previously been Unitarian from time immemorial; at least, that it had not been Trinitarian?' I can see nothing of what the Church 'had been,' in this paragraph; but, as they had at *that time* 'not a majority of the Church, and less than one fourth of the Society,' I conclude the Parish *was* not Trinitarian. To find what Mr. Deane says of religious sentiments in the town, which includes, of course, the First Parish, look on page 91 of his 'History,' where you will find the following: 'We may say, in general terms, that the doctrines preached and held, were on the ground of moderate Calvinism, until about 1750.' 'Since 1750, a majority of the people may have been denominated Arminian in their sentiments; and at the present time [1831], as names are now used, a considerable majority may be termed Unitarian.' I will now ask you, would the candid and impartial reader suppose, from Mr. Deane's 'History,' that the Church had been Unitarian from time immemorial; at least, that it had never been Trinitarian?

Again, you ask me, 'Did not this same Trinitarian Church secede from the old Society, in 1825? If so, are we not still, not only the first *Trinitarian* Church of Christ in S. but the *First Church* in S.? I do not ask for civil law to decide such a question, but do not the facts, the Bible, and common sense so decide?' 'The facts.' No. They seceded, and formed a new Society. 'The Bible.' In what chapter and verse is it recorded that your Church is the First Church in Scituate? 'Common sense.' This is one of the foundations of the civil law, which calls a church an association of some persons belonging to some society or parish

associated for *religious purposes only*, part and parcel of the same society or parish. Does common sense say, if persons dissolve their connection with a parish, leave it, that, by so doing, *they* become said parish instead of the parish left? In this quotation from your letter is another cut at the civil law. As I went into that subject in my last letter, I will pass it here, simply proposing a question for your grave reflection. Is it your duty as a Christian minister, or as a worthy citizen, thus to inculcate opposition to the laws of the land in which you live? Let the Bible and common sense aid your thoughts in answering this question to your own conscience. Think of it, I entreat you, as becomes a Christian and good citizen.

Secondly. Mr. Deane says, 'but not having a majority of the church, &c. which were ready to favor their views,' &c., and you ask, 'Is not this statement false?' No. Your reasoning, that because the Trinitarian covenant was adopted and sustained 'more than two months previous to the secession,' that there was a majority of the church in its favor, is nullified by your 'Manual,' and by the received opinion at the time of the Church's troubles. My understanding of the matter at the time, and I believe the general understanding was, that the liberal part of the Church did not *attend* the church meetings. The Pastor and perhaps some few others attended a few of the first, until they became satisfied their Orthodox brethren wanted more to control the opinions of others, than peaceably enjoy their own. They then went no more, and let the Orthodox party fix things in their own way. In confirmation of this I have been lately told by a gentleman of respectability and entitled to credit, that he was present at a conversation between two leading churchmen, one of each party, when the Orthodox man, after various arguments in the case, said, 'We must have a church meeting.' 'Have it then,' replied the liberal man, 'I shall not go near you.'

Now, if you please, take your 'Manual.' On page 11, you give the names of the majority (as *you* call it). Total, 12. On the next page you give the names of the minority. Total, 10, 'exclusive of the Pastor.' In an errata, very slightly stuck on the last leaf, one other name is added to the minority, making 11, and the Pastor added, 12. They then stood, according to your 'Manual,' 12 and 12. What makes a majority? Besides, among the *majority* 12, was one man who had paid no tax in the Parish, had not partaken the Sacrament with the Church, or been to meeting there but rarely, if at all, for 30 or 40 years. In fact, had entirely withdrawn himself from all participation or action, either in Church or Society. You say, 'he was a member of the Church in *regular* standing,' and count him with your majority!! It was at the time, and now is, one of the strangest things in this world, how it was possible, good, pious, honest men, which I believe most of your

majority were, could drum up and bring forward to vote the person alluded to. That 'he afterwards reformed,' I rejoice. But would the same men who brought him forward to vote, at that very time, have associated with him in the common intercourse of life? Would they at that time have been willing to be ranked as his intimate friends, or be classed with him as fit companions? You say, 'No course of discipline had been commenced against him.' You doubtless know, that churches holding the religious faith of Mr. Thomas's Society, for reasons satisfactory to themselves, and with which, whether satisfactory to us or not, we have nothing to do, do not expel members even if they think them unworthy. But this man had expelled himself, absolutely and entirely, for 30 or 40 years before the Separation, and morally had no business to come, or rather to be brought forward to count one in a division. I could say much more, but *with* this man, if your 'Manual' is true, they stood 12 and 12. Of course, Mr. Deane is not a liar, for saying 'not having a majority.'

Thirdly. 'The secession and formation of the new Society is represented as taking place at "that time," namely, in 1824, but which did not till April, 1825.' 'This is a false statement.'

The secession took place under the law, I believe, of 1823, eight years before the amendment of the Constitution, modifying and amending the third article of the Bill of Rights. Before this amendment, they could not leave one society without joining or forming another. They, no doubt, proceeded legally. Their certificate of separation and formation is signed by the clerk of the new Society, officially. (They had not then, perhaps, been taught, that disobedience to the civil law was a duty.) Mr. Deane published his book in 1831, before the amendment of the Constitution. Now what does he say? 'They seceded and formed a new Society.' This tells what they did. 'Their first meeting was held April, 15, 1825.' This tells when they did it. The language is plain and simple, and I can hardly see how it is possible for a candid man, or a man not predetermined to find 'false statements' to understand it as you seem to do.

You say, 'there is prejudice connected with this subject.' I most sincerely believe it. 'There is interest,' some thought so when the 'eleven persons' joined the Church. I then thought that judgment uncharitable. I still believe the 'eleven' joined with good motives, whatever the motives of their advisers might have been. But from this pertinacious adherence to the name *First Church*, and denying the civil law, &c., I have been led to doubt whether, if a certain Rev. Mr. Partridge had been as well acquainted with the law as laid down in the Dedham case, as he was with the Scriptures, he would not have been so zealous in convincing 'the eleven' that they *must* join the Church.

Several other things in your letter I should like to notice, but, having already gotten to a great length, I forbear.

Perhaps it is needless now for me to say, that, in my opinion, you have entirely failed to maintain your charges against Mr. Deane. Can *you* think, that in an action of slander, and you attempting to prove the truth in justification, that your facts and reasoning would convince a jury that Mr. Deane was a liar? It appears to me you cannot. The charge, you say, you made 'deliberately,' not, then, hastily or carelessly. I shall and must expect that you will retract this deliberate charge of falsehood against Mr. Deane, and make the retraction as public as you make the charge.

As this is probably the last letter I shall write you, I take the opportunity to assure you that I entertain no personal disrespect to you, and can most sincerely join you in wishing 'the welfare both temporal and spiritual' of the religious Society, with which you are connected; and, so far as I know myself, have indulged in no severity of expression or remark, more than I should have done in a similar case, with any one of my own particular religious views.

Respectfully, &c.

JOHN B. TURNER.

Scituate, September 13, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: It happened (as it very seldom does) that I did not send to the post-office on Saturday, and did not get your note until the next day. I had before this written and sealed the enclosed. You will perceive by it that I thought our Correspondence was finished, but I shall be happy to receive any communication you may be pleased to make. I propose to spend a part of next week at Boston, and the week after I expect to commence on business, which will keep me from home the most of the time for four weeks, at least, and perhaps more, and writing connected with said business will probably take my leisure time for some time longer. I mention this as a reason for asking your patience to wait a reply, if any is wanting.

I passed some things abruptly in the enclosed, and some without notice, through want of space. Permit me to avail myself of this opportunity to continue the subject.

You say 'there is prejudice and there is interest connected with this subject.' That prejudices did exist at the time of separation, I have no doubt. Religious difficulties are seldom without. But these, with the actors at that time, had passed, and were passing rapidly away. Feelings of kindness and mutual interchange of good offices had begun to prevail, when your 'Manual' appeared, calling up the whole matter anew for discussion and altercation. Reviving remembrances, which mutual love and charity might wish forgotten. And for what purpose? Should you be able to

sustain every position you there assume, what benefit can it possibly be to you or your Society? I am unable to see the least, either spiritual or temporal. If any, I wish you would point them out. You may say you establish the truth. Even if you do, if it is no benefit to any one, what is gained? Is the mere name of *First Church* of sufficient importance to you to justify these things?

Again. The manner of writing in said 'Manual,' impeaching the veracity of a man whose memory a great majority of the town hold in high respect, denouncing those who do not think with you, as regarding the laws of man more than the laws of God, &c. This denouncement includes, I believe, the greater part of persons acquainted with the circumstances, many of whom think your claim of First Church preposterous, and some even ridiculous. Has this a tendency to do away prejudice? Would not a course the opposite to this have better accorded with Christian principles?

'There is interest.' From what follows about 'wrongs,' &c., I might be led to think that this was an important consideration with you. With me, I can assure you it has not the least weight. Suppose that a church was a body distinct from a parish, and had civil rights like a parish; and suppose your Church, instead of a claim derived, I know not where, and supported, I hardly know how, had a legal and undisputed right to the name *First Church*, would this give them any kind of claim or right to the property of the *First Parish?* I cannot see that it would, any more than it would give you a right to the property of your neighbor Peakes, or Briggs. If this matter of 'interest' is your main object, in so strenuously persisting in this claim of *First Church*, I regret you had not first examined the subject. This needs no lawyer, plain common sense is sufficient. Had you done this, you might not have read the 'History of Scituate' with eyes so different from others, and might have left old prejudices to wear out.

'They may succeed and prosper for a time; but, Sir, alas, for their end! But I will not add.' What is meant by this I do not exactly know. But whether meant for me, or the religious Society to which I belong, I have nothing to reply. I can truly join in the poet's prayer,

> 'Let not *my* weak, unknowing hand,
> Presume *thy* bolts to throw,
> And deal destruction o'er the land,
> On each I judge thy foe.'

Respectfully,

JOHN B. TURNER.

Scituate, Sept. 30, 1844.

To J. B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir: Having returned from my previous engagements, and having received the remainder of your communications to my last, I hasten a reply. I was not a little surprised, that you should expect the Correspondence 'finished,' after having sent me such an amount of material, apposite and inapposite, leaving the whole subject in a very unfinished state. As you commenced the Correspondence, propriety requires that I should close it, which I intend to do in the present communication.

Passing over several personal allusions, as unworthy of notice, and believing that your aim and disposition 'to cut to the right and left amongst the characters of those who differ in opinion from,' you, 'whether living or dead,' especially if ministers, will be clearly read by those who may peruse your own communications, I come at once to the subject.

The first thing you notice in our 'Manual,' 'among several which seem strange' to you, relates to the dismission of Rev. Mr. Thomas. 'Dismissed,' you inquire? 'By whom? Not by his Church,' &c. I am glad to find in your letter this acknowledgment; 'the cord between church and state having been severed years ago.' But had you not mentioned this fact, I could have quoted the following more definite passage from the Revised Statutes of Massachusetts. 'The respective churches, connected and associated in public worship with such parishes and religious societies, shall continue to have, exercise, and enjoy all their accustomed privileges and liberties, respecting divine worship, church order and discipline, and shall be encouraged in the peaceable and regular enjoyment and practice thereof.' In perfect harmony with this, are sections second and fourth of our 'Church Discipline,' (see 'Church Manual,' p. 19.) with the notes subjoined from 'The Cambridge Platform,' showing that the church and state do not interfere in these respects. The church claims independence of the civil law, and the state acknowledges the claim. So far, then, as we are agreed, let us walk by the same rule. Now it is evident from the above, to a demonstration, that the secession of certain persons from *a society*, does not in the least affect their *church* standing. This in in accordance, I believe, with almost universal practice in evangelical churches. The removal of a church member from one society to another, leaves his church standing untouched, till regularly dismissed by the church and received by letter to another. (See 'Church Manual,' page 18, rule 7.) Circumstances may allow a person to remain for years connected with a church many miles distant from his place of residence. Probably, nearly a third of the members of some of our churches, (where the salary is raised by subscription,) are not technically connected with the Society, as such.

But that a person's church standing is not necessarily affected by removing from a Society, is further evident, from the fact that *the whole* Church may remove in mass, and leave the Society without any Church. If a Church and Society are two things, capable of being 'severed,' as you say they were 'years ago,' this point cannot be controverted. Now, if such a Church had a regular Pastor before the secession, they would, doubtless, have the same power to dismiss him, as such, after the secession as before. They could not, indeed, dismiss him as the minister of the Parish, but only as the Pastor of the Church. Such was the nature of Rev. Mr. Thomas's dismission, except that it was done, not with the entire concurrence of the Church, but by the majority. The Church considered that Mr. Thomas had forfeited his office, as a worthy Pastor, by obstinately refusing, and persevering in refusing to comply with the regular votes and directions of his Church, such as notifying Church-meetings, when requested to by the signature of a majority of the male members, refusing to attend said meetings, and to record their regular votes and proceedings, when requested. That the majority constitutes the only legitimate power of deciding all proper questions, brought before a Church, will not be denied, I presume, by any Congregationalist or Republican. Says Bancroft, our elegant historian, in speaking of Puritanism, 'The church existed independent of its pastor, who owed his office to its free choice; the will of the majority was its law.'* This principle of Puritanism still remains in all our Congregational churches. It will be seen from the above considerations, that the 'certificate,' of which you speak, certifying that those who seceded 'were not members of the *First Parish*,' does not in the least interfere with their connection with the *First Church*. How absurd, then, is your assertion, that, 'according to the same laws,' they 'had no further action or control in — the Church!' How absurd, also, your inference, that 'they might therefore, with as much propriety, have dismissed Mr. Flint, of Cohasset, or any other minister in the Commonwealth!'

The Ecclesiastical Council convened for the purpose, gave in part, as the result of their deliberations, what has already been published in our 'Manual,' (pages 9 and 10.) They also include in their result, 'Fifthly. If there shall not be a majority of the male members of the said Church, who shall at a regular meeting vote, as specified in the last article,' &c. Here follow further directions how to proceed in procuring a dismission and joining other churches, or organizing a new one. In the conclusion of the result, the Council say, 'They have endeavored to seek the divine guidance, and to regulate themselves by the rules of the gospel, and a regard to the glory of God, and that it is their sin-

* Vol. I. p. 461.

cere desire and prayer to the Author of all grace, that in their future proceedings the said First Church in Scituate may look to the great Head of the Church for direction, and may be led to such results, as shall conduce to the advancement of truth and righteousness and the salvation of souls.' It is thus seen, that if the majority of male members were in favor of the previous course, they were to proceed, 'as the First Church;' but if not a majority, to get dismissed and organize anew, or join other churches in the vicinity. But the majority were in favor of the previous course, and their action has been since approved by the neighboring churches.

But the question, as to the title of First Church, in this case, may be decided on even higher authority, than that of being the majority. The First Church, gathered 1634, was a Trinitarian and Calvinistic Church. None will dispute this. It was Trinitarian and Calvinistic also, in 1710–11, when our present covenant was originally adopted, and again in 1825, when that same covenant was renewed, word for word, by a fair majority, as will be shown in its place. This same Church has stood on the same ancient foundation from that time to the present. We are, therefore, *ecclesiastically*, the only legitimate First Church in Scituate. The propriety of this conclusion from the above premises, will be further evident from the following testimony and considerations.

Rev. Dr. Priestley, a distinguished Unitarian writer says, 'I do not wonder that you Calvinists entertain and express a strongly unfavorable opinion of us, Unitarians. The truth is, there neither can nor ought to be any compromise between us. If you are right, we are not Christians at all; and if we are right, you are gross idolators.' Rev. Mr. Belsham, another Unitarian writer, says, 'Opinions such as these can no more harmonize with each other, than light and darkness, than Christ and Belial. They who hold doctrines so diametrically opposite, cannot be fellow-worshippers in the same temple.' These writers are your own advocates, and to their opinions, as above quoted, we assent. Every intelligent Orthodox man, whether Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, German or Dutch Reformed, as well as my own denomination, believe that the *reception* or *rejection* of such doctrines, as *native and total depravity, instantaneous regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ, as the only atonement for sin, the Supreme Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the doctrine of the Trinity, and the absolute eternity of future punishment, constitute a contrast in Christian doctrine and church standing*, as great as the above writers imply. That Unitarians reject all these doctrines, with, perhaps, the exception of the last mentioned, I can show from their own authorized publications, as well as from the lips of your own religious

'instructor,' before competent witnesses. The last doctrine above mentioned is rejected by many Unitarian writers, if not generally, and, as you probably know, is at least not believed by your own 'instructor.' Now, if the original Church, gathered in Scituate, 1634, was Trinitarian, and embraced all the above named doctrines, as can clearly be shown; if that same Church adopted our present covenant in 1710–11, and renewed it in 1825; and if that same Church — the majority, or even a minority only — had still abode by the original Faith and Covenant; must not that body be regarded as the regular successors and legitimate First Church, ecclesiastically? But doubly so, when we remember that the majority of the Church renewed the old covenant in 1825, and still abide substantially in the faith of the same great and fundamental doctrines. We can thus trace our regular history as a Trinitarian Church, from the present back to 1634. But I would inquire, how far back you can trace your history as a Unitarian Church, which is something 'so diametrically opposite' to ours? Dear Sir, I must close this part of my reply, by saying, that your view of Mr. Thomas's dismission, with your own acknowledgments, appears exceedingly 'strange' to me.

I proceed to your next subject of remark, relative to civil, ecclesiastical, and moral law. 'Here,' you say, 'are things asserted and implied, to which,' you 'cannot agree,' namely, 'That the civil law is in opposition to the law of God, and that the ecclesiastical laws are the laws of God. To this,' you 'cannot assent.' Why not? This language, as well as my own, only implies that there are some portions of the civil law in opposition to the law of God, and likewise some portions of ecclesiastical law, agreeable to his will. Can this be doubted? Or are the civil laws all so perfect, and the ecclesiastical so corrupt, that you cannot assent to so broad a statement as this? But from what follows, I perceive you assume the ground, that civil law is everything — the highest and only practical authority, and that the ecclesiastical is nothing — may be trampled under feet as 'unauthorized,' and 'not entitled to the least consideration.' Were you the only person for whom I may be writing, I might at once lay down my pen; as of what use is it to argue with one, who denies the very first principles relative to the subject in hand. In your mind, the word 'Church' seems to have no corresponding idea. It is talked of, indeed, but often so mingled up with Society, or Parish, as to lose all separate existence, and become a perfect nonentity. The only apology I can find (it is no excuse) for such sentiments and confusion, is in the fact, that you are not, as I understand, a member of any church, and I am sorry to add, seem to be one of those described in 1 Cor. ii. 14. But as the main points at issue are introduced in your letters, I will endeavor to give them a fair examination.

To an intelligent mind, all you bring forward to illustrate your position in regard to civil and ecclesiastical law, especially the case of Massasoit's grandson, the Salem witchcraft, and laws enacted (if you suppose 'the Blue laws' were ever 'gravely enacted') against making mince-pies and kissing babies on certain days, has not the least connection with the subject. We all know, and ought more frequently to remember, that the will of God, as interpreted both by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, is too often misunderstood. But this fact ought not to lead us to the rash conclusion, that we can know nothing about either State or Church, or that the civil authority only is infallible, while the ecclesiastical is unworthy of the 'least consideration.' Did your course of remark, however, (I will not call it reasoning,) bear at all on the subject, tending to weaken our confidence in ecclesiastical laws, it must have a similar influence against all civil laws; for we learn, from your own pen, that it was the civil, not the ecclesiastical authorities, which hung all the witches, and inflicted all the penalties, of which you speak. Or, do you say, ministers then had great power in State as well as Church? perhaps it might be questioned, whether they have not still some influence there, and whether it may not have been even principally through that influence our civil laws have been improved in some of the most desirable respects, while a far different class of men may have caused them in other respects to degenerate. I might mention some of these, did time or the merits of the question at issue demand.

But although your illustrations do not bear in the least on the question, I must not suffer some of your statements to pass, without saying a word to counteract the natural impression they would make, should they meet the public eye, as I am confident that impression would be *false*, if that be not the fact in regard to some of the statements themselves. Your intimacy in spirit, as well as friendship, with Rev. Mr. Deane, seems, alas! too apparent. You employ great sophistry, if nothing worse, especially in the case of Massasoit's grandson. History informs us, that this lad was not only the grandson of Massasoit, 'the Indian prince, who received the Pilgrims with open arms — was always their friend in need,' &c., but that he was also the son of king Philip, that Indian warrior, who excited the New England tribes, and those as far south, it was supposed, as Virginia, to unite in cutting off, if possible, the whole English colony, then in its infancy. You doubtless recollect 'his first attack upon the English at Swansey, as they were returning from public worship' — how also he 'marked his route with the burning of houses, and the scalping of the defenceless inhabitants' — the fate of those 'seventy or eighty young men, the flower of Essex county,' at Bloody Brook — how 'pe-

culiarly disastrous to Scituate,' also,* and the numerous other towns laid in ashes, beside the brave captains and others, who fell in those melancholy times, some by the most frightful tortures. Says the historian: 'Twelve or thirteen towns were destroyed; the disbursements and losses equalled in value half a million of dollars — an enormous sum for the few of that day. More than six hundred men, chiefly young men, the flower of the country, of whom the mother might have been proud, perished in the field. As many as six hundred houses were burned — there was scarcely a family from which death had not selected his victim.' † 'Every eleventh family was houseless, and every eleventh soldier had sunk to his grave.' ‡ It was during this struggle of the English, as it were, for existence, that Philip's son, with some one hundred and thirty or more Indian warriors, 'fell' prisoners 'into the hands of our ancestors.' It was under these circumstances, that the 'innocent boy,' of whom you speak, was captured; and it was truly a question, whether these prisoners should be released or executed, while those at liberty continued to burn and kill, and it were still doubtful what would be the result. Says Hutchinson: § 'The cruelties which had been exercised upon the English, were urged in excuse for the treatment which the Indians received, who were made prisoners, or surrendered themselves.' 'A great many, therefore, of the chiefs were executed in Boston and Plymouth, and most of the rest were sold, and shipped off for slaves to Bermudas and other parts.' But, did the ministers do all this? Did they even advise to send any, or especially this lad, into 'hopeless slavery?' I do not find it so recorded. They were, indeed, called upon to express their opinion, and, such as it was, I will state in their own language. To this inquiry, 'The Rev. Mr. Cotton, of Plymouth, and the Rev. Mr. Arnold, of Marshfield, gave the following answer:'

'The question being proposed to us by our honored rulers, whether Philip's son be a child of death, our answer herereunto is, that we do acknowledge that rule, Deut. xxiv. 16, to be moral, and therefore perpetually binding; namely, that in a particular act of wickedness, though capital, the crime of the parent doth not render his child a subject of punishment by the civil magistrate; yet, upon serious consideration, we humbly conceive, that the children of notorious traitors, rebels, and murderers, especially of such as have been principal leaders and actors in such horrid villanies, and that against a whole nation, yea, the whole Israel of God, may be involved in the guilt of their parents, and may *salva*

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* See Deane's 'History,' p. 120 – 128.
† See Bancroft, vol. ii. p. 109.
‡ See Goodrich.
§ Hist. of Mass., vol. i. p. 307.

republica [that is, for the public safety], be adjudged to death, as to us seems evident by the Scripture instances of Saul, Achan, Haman, the children of whom were cut off by the sword of justice, for the transgression of their parents, although concerning some of those children, it be manifest, that they were not capable of being actors therein.

(Signed) SAMUEL ARNOLD,
JOHN COTTON.'*

Here is nothing said about sending into slavery, or indeed whether Philip's son should be executed at all. They laid down a general principle, as they understood it, and then left the civil authorities to apply it, if approved, wherever they thought proper. They did not, however, follow 'their decision,' even if they supposed Philip's son one of those 'involved in the guilt of their parents;' for 'their decision' was, that 'such may be adjudged to death,' not 'sold to hopeless slavery.'

The 'Rev. Mr. Keith, of Bridgewater, gave a more benignant interpretation.' He says, after referring to several texts of Scripture, for his more lenient reply in respect to this boy: 'I hope God will direct those whom it doth concern to a good issue. Let us join our prayers at the throne of grace, with all our might, that the Lord would so dispose of all public motions and affairs, that his Jerusalem in this wilderness, may be the habitation of justice, and the mountain of holiness.'† I can find no authority more to your purpose, than the above, and surely such serious, candid, and respectful replies do not look so much like the cruel 'domineering spirit,' as like the true Christian. 'The progress in knowledge,' of which you so often speak, as well as the Christian spirit exhibited, I fear is not quite so flattering as you seem to suppose. They had some kind and Christian feeling, and probably a little knowledge, even in those early times, as will appear in the sequel

I might here refer to the early efforts of our ancestors to enlighten and Christianize the Indians, showing a very different spirit cherished by many, especially of the clergy, from that which you seem to prefer to charge upon them, but will desist with the following brief quotations from Governor Everett on this point. He says: 'Our fathers regarded the aboriginal inhabitants as heathen. They bestowed unwearied pains to Christianize them, and with much greater success than is generally supposed.'‡ 'Since the death of the apostle Paul, a nobler, truer, and warmer

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* See Appendix to Morton's 'New England Memorial,' Judge Davis's edition, pp. 453, 454.

† Id. p. 455.

‡ Orations, p. 591.

spirit, than John Eliot, never lived.'* I need not add, to set the case of Massasoit's grandson, and the spirit of Christian ministers of the day, in the true and proper light, or to wield your own weapon against yourself.

It will be equally easy to overturn your witchcraft illustration. I admit the delusion, but it was the fault of the age rather than of particular men,† like the delusions of our own times, in regard to ardent spirit, American slavery, Millerism, and war, all which we hope are soon to pass away. It might also be questioned, whether there is not as much in reason and Scripture to support the theory of witchcraft,‡ as that of Mesmerism (familiarly called Animal Magnetism), at least, in some of its forms. Still we know, that after all this 'progress in knowledge,' in these 'enlightened times,' and even in 'our University,' has this latter (shall I not call it delusion?) been admitted her halls for exhibition. And may it not be possible for some future historian to make out quite as true and affecting a story of more recent events, touching intemperance, slavery, or war, in which warm, if not 'cold-blooded murders' occur by thousands instead of tens, as you have done in the case of Massasoit's grandson, or the Salem witchcraft?

Laws had existed in England, making witchcraft a capital crime before the influence of the Puritans arose,§ and executions had occurred in various parts of the mother country, by the decisions (among others) of Sir Matthew Hale, one of the brightest ornaments of the English bench.‖ Says Bancroft: 'In the years in which Scotland sacrificed hecatombs to the delusion [witchcraft], there were *three* victims in New England,' and it would seem only three.¶ Like numerous other laws from the English code, that respecting witchcraft was enrolled on the statute-book here. If ministers, as well as physicians, justices, legislators, and judges,** approved this law for a time, *they* were evidently sincere in it, as the Rev. George Burroughs, minister of Salem, and a considerable number of professors of religion were executed among others, though I know not as any judge or justice suffered in a similar

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* Orations, p. 614.

† 'In New England, at the time of Cotton Mather, the belief in witchcraft may be said to have been universal.' — *Prof. Pond.*

‡ See Ex. xxii. 18; Deut. xviii. 10, 11; 1 Sam. xxviii. 7–20.

§ 'The Puritans first made their appearance during the reign of Queen Mary,' 1553 to 1558. — *Worcester.*

‖ 'At those trials, Sir Thomas Brown attended as a witness, who "declared his opinion in favor of the reality of witchcraft, and entered into a particular discussion of the subject before the jury."' In the 17th century, '"more than two hundred were hanged in England, thousands were burned in Scotland, and large numbers perished in various parts of Europe," for the supposed crime of witchcraft.'— *Prof. Pond.*

¶ Vol. i. p. 465.

** 'Particularly Chief Justice Stoughton.'— *Prof. Pond.*

manner. Ministers, I believe, rejoiced equally, at least, with others in the removal of the evil. But evidently, men who could converse with supposed witches in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Indian languages,* and lay the foundation of such a republic and institutions, as we find the Puritans did lay, were no fools or knaves.

Says a late governor of Connecticut, in a recent letter to Prof. Pond, respecting his little book, entitled the 'Mather Family': 'The dispassionate, luminous, and effectual manner in which you have refuted the malignant aspersions attempted to be cast on the fair name of Increase and Cotton Mather, richly merit the applause of all virtuous and honorable men.'† Our Pilgrim fathers had their foibles and errors, no doubt, as most others, but we shall have to go far and search long for such another band of men as first settled these New England shores, whether we regard their learning, talent, resolution, or ardent piety. You know their civil compact before they left the 'Mayflower,' — you know the system of common schools they devised and adopted — you know also by whom and for what purposes chiefly, our more than one hundred colleges, have been established, and who still generally preside over them. Nor will you probable call in question the following testimony of Unitarian writers.‡

Says Bancroft: 'The Puritans established a government in America, such as the laws of natural justice warranted.' 'Calvinism overthrew priestcraft; saw in goodness, infinite joy; in evil, infinite woe; and recognizing no other abiding distinctions, opposed secretly, but surely, hereditary monarchy, aristocracy, and bondage. Puritantism exalted the *laity* — was religion struggling for the people. The effects of Puritanism display its true character still more distinctly. Ecclesiastical tyranny is of all kinds the worst; its fruits are cowardice, idleness, ignorance, and poverty: Puritanism was a life-giving spirit; activity, thrift, intelligence followed in its train; and as for courage, a coward and a Puritan never went together. The Puritans of New England are parents of one third the whole white population of the United States.'§

Says Rev. Alexander Young: "It has been the practice of the Independent or Congregational clergy, both in Old and New England, from the earliest times, to take an interest and part in public affairs. The prominent and efficient agency, which they exercised in the infancy of our colonial settlements, is well known: Cotton, Hooker, and Davenport, shared at least an equal power

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* As Cotton Mather did. (*Magnalia*, vol. ii. p. 402.)
† See 'Boston Recorder,' Oct. 3, 1844.
‡ Chiefly Unitarian.
§ See vol. i. 460, 461, 462, 463, 467; vol. ii. 461.

with Winthrop, Haynes, and Eaton, in moulding the civil polity of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The services of Increase Mather in obtaining the second Charter of Massachusetts are recorded in her history; and the patriotic exertions of Mayhew, Chauncy, and Cooper, before and during the revolutionary war, will never be forgotten. The Congregational clergy were found, at that time, almost to a man, on the side of their country's independence; and they have ever been the earnest and consistent advocates of liberty with order.'*

Says Worcester, in his 'Elements of History': 'Hume acknowledges the services of the Puritans, "by whom alone," according to him, "the precious spark of *liberty* had been kindled and was preserved; and to whom the English owe the whole freedom of their Constitution."' 'They were strenuous advocates for freedom in the State, and a more thorough reform in religion.'†

Says President Dwight, of Yale College: 'Plymouth was the first town built in New England by civilized men; and those by whom it was built were inferior in worth to no body of men, whose names are recorded in history, during the last seventeen hundred years.'‡ The poet also thus eulogizes these men:

> 'These are the iron men, that broke
> Ground, where the Indian's war-fire curled;
> These spurned the princely, priestly yoke,
> These are the fathers of the world.' — TAPPAN.

The above quotations show how applicable your charge of 'king-craft and priest-craft' is upon the puritans and New England clergy. If you had known the first principles of Congregationalism, you would have known that this system, as derived from the New Testament, knows no priest, except the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest. That the clergy, in general, have not much departed from their former high standing, may be seen, in part, from the testimony of as great a mind, probably, as this land ever produced. Please read the fourteenth and fifteenth pages of Daniel Webster's speech on Girard's will, delivered last February, for this proof.

But I pass to another point in the discussion, — the morality of the question. This I regard as a very important point. But you say, 'I considered your claims of being the First Church, of little consequence.' Again, 'I say nothing of the moral law, for I can see no possible way it can have any bearing on the number of your Church.' Still further, 'No legislature in Massachusetts would dare enact laws to clash with the Divine laws.' And again,

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* 'Chronicles of Pilgrims,' p. 37.
† See pp. 199, 205, 206; also 241.
‡ Quoted in Young's 'Chronicles of Pilgrims,' p. 161.

'I cannot believe the people of Massachusetts would permit a law, manifestly contrary to the laws of God, to stand on their statute-books an instant.' But you believe such laws have stood there, as in the case of witchcraft and kissing babies, &c.; and is it not possible the statute-book may not yet be quite purged? This may appear more evident as we proceed.

You seem, dear Sir, most carefully to avoid any allusion (except in one brief hint, near your close), to the fact, that our Trinitarian ancestors left property to the amount of some thousands of dollars, to this First Church, and the Society connected with it, for the support of their religion, which we have seen, is something 'so diametrically opposite' to Unitarianism. This fund was left principally, if not entirely, near a century before Calvinism lost the ascendency in the town (it is doubtful whether it ever fairly lost that ascendency in the Church, as will be seen more fully hereafter), which you say, approvingly, Rev. Mr. Deane fixes at 'about 1750.' Now this fund, '*you* know, *I* know, and *all* know, as well as we can from common information' and common sense, has been *grossly perverted*. And is there no morality, or rather *im*morality in this? As I have been repeatedly informed (and the sentiment is *true*, whether ever spoken or not), one of your own Society, a Universalist, once rose in Parish meeting, and spoke something as follows, in respect to this fund: —

'Gentlemen, you all know *this fund justly belongs to the Orthodox*, but, by uniting our strength, we outvoted them (virtually) in the Parish, and took it from them; and now the Universalist party have the same right to take this fund, by the same means, if in our power, from the Unitarian party, as we all had formerly in taking it from the Orthodox.' The whole community may see the propriety and force of this short speech, and you well know the long struggle, that has been carried on for years, between the two parties in your own Society, till endurance was no longer supportable, when the oppressed party, last spring, leaped from your embrace.*

But to return. I say you carefully avoid all allusion to this fund, with as much skill, and, if I may judge from the commotion developed in some minds, your community would make a similar ado under the agitation of this question, as our more southern brethren, — the slaveholders, — do, when the morality of the slavery question is discussed. They plead the civil, and often the divine law, in support of their claims to the slave. But it is doubted whether you will openly dare go as far in support of your

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* From whom Mr. Wight took this scurrilous anecdote nobody can tell. It is not in our knowledge, that any such language was ever uttered in a Parish meeting, or on any other occasion. We suppose Mr. Wight has been imposed upon by some unscrupulous or mistaken advisers.

claims to our funds. I know the civil law, and especially as interpreted by Unitarian judges,* decides in your favor, — a decision, however, I doubt not, destined to pass into the same kind of a memorial, as the Salem witchcraft, which you say 'will always be a stain on the fair name of Massachusetts.' I think, Sir, you, and your more intelligent associates, will not presume to advocate before this 'enlightened age,' the direct morality of such self-evident perversion of funds, — such legalized unrighteousness. It was prudent, therefore, in you, to keep as clear of the moral law as possible. Sir, it has been a matter of rejoicing to our Orthodox churches, that the 'cord between church and state' *was* 'severed years ago,' and it is their only regret, that it was not 'severed' a few years sooner. It would have saved in their possession some hundreds of thousands, now appropriated to the most destructive influence. And if the time has come, when the counsels of divines and 'their misdeeds and failures, in any respect, may be talked of, and even judged of, in charity, without transgressing the divine laws,' has it not also come, when we may talk and judge, in a similar manner, of the civil law, and of justices and judges even, with their 'misdeeds and failures?' Those ancestors who left our funds for the support of their religion, had, doubtless, as little sympathy with the peculiar doctrines of Unitarians, as the present Trinitarian Church in Scituate, and would probably have left a fund for their support about as soon.† Now is there no morality, or rather *im*morality in snatching the children's bread, left by their fathers, and giving it to strangers? Giving it, — no, not the bread, — if it were, we would scarce open our lips, though we begged, as we have, indeed, virtually, from door to door; but that bread is changed, as we believe, to another substance, — another gospel, wholly incapable of saving a single soul, through its direct instrumentality. How can true 'righteousness' be 'the central principle' in such a system?

But we are not alone, — numerous other churches in this commonwealth are similarly situated. I will cite a few instances, to show the defect in our civil law. Take the town of Reading,

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* It is surprising, that any person can presume thus to speak respecting the judicial proceedings of the Supreme Court. What if every one, who could not win a suit, were to take refuge in such calumnious reflections upon the Bench, before which his cause was tried? It is needless for us to vindicate honorable men from the imputations here cast upon them. The Judges of the Courts of Massachusetts, are not so easily made parties to sectarian prejudices of any sort. But the consequences of such contemptuous language respecting them upon the best interests of society, all men can foresee.

† Mr. Wight has gone out of his way to refer, in a Note, to British Unitarian Funds. He has forgotten, however, to mention, if he knew, the recent decision of the House of Lords, by which every disputed title has been confirmed and settled forever. Here was no sectarian bias.

where a similar secession took place, in the spring of 1834. They had built a new and convenient house of worship, with vestry, belfry, &c., in 1829, at an expense of about four thousand dollars. The church numbered from sixty to seventy members. The separation took place when all the voters in town belonged to the first parish, unless they had joined some other. When the question was tried, it was decided by those who seldom if ever worshipped in this house, to turn this church out of doors. About one half the voters on the occasion were strangers, called in for this virtuous object. The church and some others retired, when it appeared, that those compelled in conscience to leave their new house, owned about one half of all the pews, while those who remained to enjoy it, owned only three or four, the remainder being unsold. Now the civil law authorized all this, yea, and more. The church must give up their plate and Records! But to whom? Committees were appointed on both sides, one to give up, and the other to receive the treasure. They met for the purpose. The *ecclesiastical* first church required of the *civil* first church to show their authority. They had the property in their possession, and felt under obligation to deposit it in lawful hands. The civil committee could not then show their authority. Hence they were compelled to adjourn. On the second meeting, their authority was accepted and the business transacted. But what was this authority of the committee from the civil first church? The minister, being one of the committee, stated that a church meeting was regularly notified, both from the pulpit and by written notice posted. He was present at the church meeting, and three women (two of whom had been excommunicated, and the other was under church discipline). The minister himself had never been baptized, or joined any church whatever, as he acknowledged on the occasion. These three women, at this time, and under these circumstances, composed the entire *civil* first church, all the males and the other females having retired with those disposed, and built another house, near by, such as they were able. But these three women proceeded to choose this minister and two other men from the parish, to act as this committee. Since the separation, the *civil* first church have kept their house open only a part of the time — last winter about one third of the Sabbaths, and then often only to hear a sermon read!

Take another case, — the wealthy town of Framingham. Here was a large and flourishing church, — their silver plate alone was valued at several hundred dollars, — the avails of church collections at the sacrament. Here only one woman, as I am credibly informed, remained to constitute the *civil* first church, and receive the plate, Records, &c. The separation took place under the same law, I believe, as that at Reading. In this case, the plate

was not demanded. It was not, however, because the civil law was not in their favor, but the injustice was too glaring! I have these facts from the most credible authority, though, in the latter case, I am not able to be very full. Numerous other similar instances might be collected, were it necessary, as Old Cambridge, Dedham, Bedford, Malden, &c., &c.

Now I ask for the morality of all this. Need we go to the Bible, or even to a 'lawyer,' to decide whether such things are right? Surely, good 'plain, common sense is sufficient.' What encouragement to the benevolent to leave funds for any charitable object whatever, if such perversions may be allowed and justified? But I sincerely believe the time will soon come, when such laws and decisions will be corrected. Such 'laws of the land' will not always 'remain.' While they do, however, I will endeavor to submit, as a 'worthy citizen,' and 'Christian minister.' I revere the laws and authority of old Massachusetts; as one of her native sons, I love her name and institutions well, and shall cherish none other than the best wishes for her highest civil and ecclesiastical welfare. (Nor shall I attempt to bring our early and most worthy ancestors into such unjust and dark repute, as some have vainly striven to do.) Such views and feelings, however, are in perfect harmony with a free expression of opinion in regard to any of her 'misdeeds and failures.'

I could cite other instances, in which I believe the laws of Massachusetts are evidently wrong, were it necessary. There have been several articles of some length in the 'Boston Recorder' a few weeks past, headed 'Sunday contracts, — the law wrong in Massachusetts.' The statute-book contains also, among several similar articles, for which the offender may 'be sentenced to death, by a general court-martial,' the following: —

'Any officer or soldier who shall desert.'

'Any officer or soldier who shall knowingly harbor or protect an enemy, or relieve them with money, victuals, or ammunition.'* But the New Testament teaches, expressly, '*Love* your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you.† 'If thine *enemy* hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink,' ‡ &c. Yet you say, 'No legislature in Massachusetts would dare enact laws to clash with the Divine laws.' 'I cannot believe the people of Massachusetts would permit a law, *manifestly* contrary to the laws of God, to stand on their statute-book an instant.' Read the above to a mere child, and he would tell you, there was 'manifest clashing.'

In passing, I will notice that the word 'formal' should have been enclosed in brackets instead of the parentheses.

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* Revised Statutes, Part I. Tit. 4, chap. 12, sec. 138, arts. 3 and 9.

† Matt. v. 44. ‡ Rom. xii. 20.

I have now a word to add, in review of what you say, touching the 'false statements, made in the history of the town.' First, in regard to the covenant itself. This, I say, and you admit, was adopted March 12, 1710–11. But you say, 'This will hardly answer' my 'purpose.' 'Until some time after they "became desirous of introducing a covenant," they had no knowledge of the existence of any such thing.' *Who* had no knowledge of this? Not, surely, those who adopted the covenant, in 1710–11. Not Dea. Israel Litchfield, who joined this church in July, 1776; nor Mr. Eleazar Peakes, who testifies (and *you* know his memory is as good as a *written* document) that Dea. Litchfied told him of this covenant on the 'Records,' and of having examined it about that time (1776). If you now turn to page 13 of our 'Manual,' you will find four of the survivors (including the last mentioned), who belonged to the Church before the separation, testifying as follows: '*Knowing* that the First Church in Scituate, — the dear Church of their Puritan fathers, — was originally evangelical, and still had a church-covenant, fully Trinitarian and evangelical, on their church-records,' &c. Dea. Howard White, another survivor, and one of the minority on our list, now a member of the Baptist church, testifies to the same fact. I know not how many others could testify, were it necessary to produce them. Pardon me, then, if I say, how 'preposterous, and even ridiculous,' for one who belongs to no church, and seems scarcely to have any true idea of what the name signifies, to charge upon 'good, pious, honest men,' acknowledged to be such, the *most deliberate falsehood*, respecting their sacred covenant! How can you, or the world in general, *know* all the vows and obligations Christians take upon themselves, or how extensive their knowledge respecting these things? But it is not very strange, with such a Pastor as it appears was then set over the flock, that many out of the Church, and, perhaps, not a few even in the Church, 'had no knowledge of the existence of any such thing.' That there was evil, and a very 'loose state of things in this Church,' at that time, cannot be doubted. Nor is it much to the credit of the 'liberal' party, that 'when the Orthodox man, after various arguments in the case,' said, "We must have a church meeting," that 'the liberal man' replied, 'Have it, then, — I shall not go near you.' This, truly, sets the subject in not a very favorable light. The 'Records' state, that the request to the Pastor (dated Nov. 20, 1824), 'To appoint a meeting of the Church, on Thursday, the 25th of November instant, at one o'clock, P. M.,' was 'signed by a *large majority* of the Church.'

But to return to the covenant. You quote me as using the phrase, 'loose state with respect to *their* covenant,' and then add, 'that is, they knew of no covenant, and wanted one.' What is the meaning of the pronoun 'their?' Does it not denote posses-

sion? Thus in two very short sentences intimately connected, you acknowledge and then flatly *deny* the very same thing! You seem, indeed, here driven to the greatest straits to keep up a *show* of argument. Take your comment on the words 'found' and 'renew,' as specimens of your reasoning. Can I not '*find*' a passage in history, or in the Bible, which I *knew of*, and was familiar with before? But you say, 'it would not have been a thing "found," had they known of it before.' So of the word 'renew.' Had you consulted a common dictionary, or known the familiar language of almost every Christian, you would not have written in this trifling way. Christians speak almost daily of renewing their covenant vows, and especially at communion seasons.

But take another, and perhaps the only proper view of this subject. Says Webster: a 'covenant is a mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing. In church affairs, a solemn agreement between the members of a church, that they will walk together according to the precepts of the gospel, in brotherly affection.' Such a covenant was adopted 1710 – 11, by the First Church in Scituate. *When* was it laid aside by the Church? At what meeting? All power in a Congregational church rests with the majority, not with the pastor. Did this Church ever repeal their 'solemn agreement?' Where and when was the vote recorded? You, who have access to our 'Records,' can tell. If not, then does the old covenant stand in force, and all who enter the Church, not knowing the foundation on which they stand, greatly err. A church covenant may in some respects be compared to a constitution of government, which stands in force till repealed, whether all the subjects of that government are acquainted with it or not. But it is evident this Church, or at least the more intelligent part of it, did know to some extent their foundation, though in a 'loose state.' They speak of this covenant, as that 'on which this Church *has* stood for more than a century.' (The 'Records' say '*has* stood,' which was changed to '*had* stood' in the 'Manual,' (p. 7), to harmonize with another past tense.) Moreover, the 'Records' inform us, that at the Church-meeting, held December 25, 1824, 'Rev. Mr. Thomas proposed that a committee of three be chosen to assist him to attend to revise or amend the old covenant, and lay the same before the Church, as soon as is convenient, for their approbation. Paul Merritt, Eleazar Peakes, and Levi Vinal, were chosen for the above purpose.' But it appears, that at the next meeting, regularly notified, the Church renewed the old covenant instead of one revised or amended from it. Hence we learn from the history, as well as from living witnesses, and the nature of the covenant, that the First Church in Scituate were then (in 1825), standing on the old covenant. I say, then, that Mr. Deane's lan-

guage plainly and naturally conveys a false idea to the candid reader, and hence his statement must be regarded as 'false.' And this, as you imply, if false, he 'must have made knowingly,' as many others also believe.

Again, you reply to my inquiry, whether 'the facts, the Bible, and common sense' do not decide, that we are 'not only the First Trinitarian Church of Christ in Scituate, but the First Church in Scituate,' as follows: First, in respect to 'the facts.' 'No, they seceded and formed a new Society.' This is a very summary answer, truly; but nothing to do with the point at issue, as before abundantly shown. In your view, however, if the fact had been, that every member of the Church had seceded, the *First* Church (though *no* church) had still remained! Again you inquire, does 'the Bible' decide in our favor? Here you ask, 'In what chapter and verse is it recorded, that your Church is the First Church in Scituate?' A question in part, very much like that put by an ancient ruler (John iii. 4). But you will find the principles laid down in Acts vi. 1–6, and xv. 1–32, and elsewhere in the New Testament. Congregationalism, as to church order and government, is believed to be derived from 'the Bible.' That majorities settled questions, as to church officers and discipline, is evident from the passages above referred to; *choosing* evidently implies this. But one important consideration further.

We read in the New Testament much about 'churches,' as 'the church at Jerusalem'—'at Corinth,' 'Ephesus,' 'Antioch,' &c., &c., but nothing of parishes, or civil societies, as connected with them and controlling them. Individuals were, indeed, somewhat controlled, when brought before governors and kings and imprisoned or heheaded; but I do not recollect of any parish, or even a governor, taking charge of the affairs of the churches, as such. The church and state were 'severed,' for a time, doubtless, even centuries 'ago.'

The facts appear to be simply these. The gospel, regarding all men, 'by nature the children of wrath,' and as 'dead in trespasses and sins,' introduces a system of means (including the agency of the Holy Ghost) for their regeneration and salvation. As men are regenerated, or born again of the Spirit, they become members of Christ's spiritual church, of which he is the Head. He has made it the duty of such to unite also with his external or visible church, for the purpose of the more orderly support of gospel worship, instruction, and ordinances. The New Testament teaches us that the early converts did thus associate. But as the gospel spread, and its temporal as well as spiritual blessings were perceived, many, not professedly regenerated, have been disposed to meet with the church and assist them in these objects Rejoicing in this willingness, both from the hope that these individuals might thus become savingly acquainted with the gospel,

and from its diminishing their own pecuniary expense, the church gladly welcomed their presence and aid. Hence the origin of religious societies and parishes. They are something added, not the original root. But, alas! occasionally, churches have greatly *suffered* from such kindness. In our day, they have too often been treated by some of those societies, much as was the kind husbandman, who received to his bosom the cold and stiffened serpent. When a little warmed, he *bit his benefactor*. Now, dear Sir, look again into your Bible, and let its pure light assist you in reviewing your hasty decision. I need not add, to show the proper decision of 'common sense,' after such facts and the Bible have spoken.

Secondly. In regard to the majority. Mr. Deane says: 'but not having a majority of the Church,' &c. I ask, 'Is not this statement false?' and you reply, 'No;' and thus prove the adage, 'a man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still.' You come to this conclusion, by refusing to look at, or acknowledge one part of my proof, which I will now state a little more definitely. You admit the twelve, who acted in the dismission of Rev. Mr. Thomas, to be Trinitarians, though you take some exception at the moral character of one of them. Leaving him for the present, I wish to direct your particular notice to the other part of my proof, 'that several others of the minority, soon after withdrew and united with Trinitarian churches.' If you think this general statement not sufficient, I will be a little more definite, confirming it by the following testimony, gathered in part since I commenced this communication.

'This may certify, that I was present at the meeting of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, held February 6, 1825, and advocated and approved the renewal of the ancient covenant then adopted, my religious sentiments having been and still are fully Trinitarian and Calvinistic. (Signed)

Scituate, October 2, 1844.' HOWARD WHITE.

'This may certify, that at the time of the renewal of the ancient covenant of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, February 6, 1825, my sentiments were decidedly Trinitarian and Calvinistic, and have been from that day to this, as well as for years previous to that event, and that I should have come off with the rest, had I not found it would have created difficulties, greater than I feared I could meet. (Signed)

Scituate, October 2, 1844.' SIMEON VINAL.

The opinion of Mr. John Studley (now deceased), who came off soon after the separation, is well known as Trinitarian and Calvinistic. Mr. W. also states that he *approved* of the dismission of

Mr. Thomas by the Church, and should have been present at that meeting and voted with the majority, had not some Providence prevented. We have then, at least, *fifteen* to *nine* (including the Pastor), in favor of the old covenant, or Trinitarians; quite a fair, and one would think, among people of common discernment an indisputable majority. This is also in perfect harmony with the fact, that 'a large majority,' 'signed' the request for 'a church meeting,' and also, with your own acknowledgments, 'that the liberal part of the Church did not attend the Church-meetings. The Pastor, and perhaps some few others, attended a few of the first.' It is beautiful to see how all things harmonize, when we get into the path of truth.

We learn, also, from the above, that our 'majority, 12,' would have become 14 to 10, or rather 15 to 8, instead of 12 to 11 (the Pastor having no right to vote under such circumstances), in the dismission of Rev. Mr. Thomas, had not peculiar circumstances prevented.

A word now in respect to the objectionable character. How could *you*, dear Sir, thus disturb 'the ashes of the dead?' You say, he 'had paid no tax in the Parish, had not partaken the sacrament with the Church, or been to meeting there but rarely if at all, for thirty or forty years,' &c. It is well known that one reason why he did not attend that meeting and sacrament was, that he did not approve the sentiments there advanced. He was constant in Rev. Mr. Grosvenor's ministry, and whenever Calvinistic candidates preached (between the years '80 and '87), till Mr. Dawes was settled. But during his ministry and that of his successor, he seldom attended meeting, except when occasional Calvinistic preaching was enjoyed in his neighborhood. Another reason (perhaps occasioned by the loose preaching, and state of things at that day), he became intemperate in his habits, no very uncommon sin in those days, for I am most credibly informed, that at least two of the small minority, for one in the majority, were at least equally intemperate, sometimes coming even to the sacrament in a very improper state, and leaving it in a worse. This man had too much good sense and intelligence to be guilty of such inconsistency. But he was poor, and unable to pay a 'tax,' while the others were gentlemen of some property. Now I leave it for you and others to decide, which would be the most desirable associate, or the party in the church which acted most inconsistently in regard to these individuals. I regret the necessity of disclosing such painful events, but you will remember who is the author of this necessity.

When a church has so far degenerated as to give up the choice of a pastor exclusively to the parish, to invite all the congregation disposed, whether professors or not, to partake with them at the sacrament, and not to discipline members, with whom they would

not associate 'in the common business of life,' or 'judge them fit companions,' I must also acknowledge, what you seem to take for granted, that there is no difference between a Church and a Parish.

Thirdly. In regard to the date. This I am willing to relinquish, as being immaterial and unworthy of dispute.

From what has been said, it is evident, the whole paragraph under examination, from Mr. Deane's 'History,' should read something as follows: In A. D. 1824, a large majority of the First Church, being greatly dissatisfied with the present loose state of things, particularly with regard to their Covenant and Confession of Faith, became desirous to renew and 'establish' more firmly their ancient covenant, which recognized the doctrine of the Trinity. This was effected by a fair majority, early in the following year. But the Pastor not approving this covenant (being a Unitarian), refused to take any notice of the regular votes and proceedings of his Church, and three fourths [perhaps] of the Parish, with a few of his Church, sustaining him in this course, the Church, as a body, were led to the painful necessity of dismissing him as their Pastor, and even of withdrawing from the house, where their fathers worshipped; all of which was done, in exact accordance with the approbation and advice of a regular Ecclesiastical Council convened for the purpose. During this spring (1825) they also formed a new Society.

This is a true account of the matter; but how poorly it coincides with Mr. Deane's statement, can be seen by the discerning and impartial. 'Perhaps it is needless now for me to say, that in my opinion you have entirely failed' to justify Mr. Deane's statements, and I doubt not the decision of every candid, unprejudiced mind, will agree with me in this conclusion. If so, you 'will join with me in condemning the falsehoods, and in making them public.' If you and I cannot decide, the *public* must.

'They had not then perhaps been taught that disobedience to the civil law was a duty.' For whom you intend this I am not aware. If for myself, I can truly say, I am not conscious of having said or done anything to justify such a remark. I presume, however, you will not disagree with me, in such a case as the Salem witchcraft, that, were the same laws to exist now as formerly, 'disobedience' would be a virtue, rather than a sin. I advocate disobedience to civil law on no other grounds; and even here, where we can innocently submit, though with suffering (as in the case of our funds), I cling to obedience to law, till that law shall be repealed by the proper authority; so that you, and others associated with you, may rest contented (so far as I am concerned) to feed on another's bread, till conscience and a sense of duty may lead you to relinquish our funds, with interest, to the

First Church of Christ in Scituate, and the Society connected with it. We ask not for funds, given to support Unitarianism, if you have such, but for those given by our Calvinistic fathers, and evidently for the support of Calvinistic worship. I am willing that Unitarians, and other errorists, should have full liberty of speech, and advocate their doctrines, however destructive, if they will; but I wish to see them do it honorably and fairly — upon their own and not another's capital! It is this latter evil of which I complain. Often has a church been turned out of their house of worship, and then (unless there was a large fund connected) has the door been locked for a large part of the entire year together. Such houses are monuments of injustice. But the 'waning power' of Unitarianism is not always to be unrighteously sustained, by a virtuous and impartial legislature and judiciary. I doubt not still more enlightened times are at hand. Several of the old societies, which had driven out the church from their houses of worship, have recently invited them to return, and enjoy the pastor of their choice, as in Berlin, Acton, &c. This is as it should be; or, if the separation be continued, let strict justice be done by both parties.

You inquire, 'For what purpose' is our 'Manual' published, 'calling up the whole matter' (of prejudices and difficulties) 'anew for discussion and altercation.' I think, Sir, what has already been written will sufficiently answer this inquiry, and 'point' to the 'benefit' both 'spiritual and temporal,' which ought to spring from it, and from this investigation. I doubt not you, and many of your associates, would be glad to have been left without discussion and disturbance in your present possessions. So does the slaveholder wish to be *let alone*. But, says Burke, on the use of agitation, 'I love *clamor* when there is *abuse*. The alarm-bell disturbs the inhabitants, but saves them from being burnt in their beds.' The circumstances call for our 'Manual.' Our old people, and those most intimately acquainted with the facts, were fast dying off, while the title of 'First Church' was still claimed by both parties. It seemed both reasonable and important, therefore, that it should be decided on true principles, while *living witnesses* could testify. But if 'old prejudices' are 'to wear out' by neglecting truth and justice, and the salvation of souls, unwilling as I am, naturally, for strife and contention, I should still prefer, like Paul, to be 'disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.' A state of agitation is preferable to one of moral death!

Your poetic close. It is no new thing for evil-doers to charge severity upon the faithful, because they declare unto men their sins, and the inevitable consequences thereof. At such times, nothing is more common than to claim for themselves a large share of 'liberality' and 'charity.' But the Puritans, or their

legitimate descendants, will make no compromise with error, or fear to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear: and should the land of their fathers again prove unworthy of them, I doubt not they will be willing again to suffer the loss of all things, for the sake of Christ and a good conscience, and seek for another wilderness in some new world, where they may enjoy their religion, and plant another New England, with all her beloved institutions!

I might dwell on several other points, touched upon in your letters, but I have already, perhaps, quite wearied your patience. I have regretted the introduction of foreign matter, and also the necessity laid upon me, of taking up first principles — the mere elements of ecclesiastical usage, in order to make myself understood. I may also add, it is much easier to make 'charges' or 'false statements' than to refute or sustain them. I am also happy to see, that you find no more things of importance in our 'Manual,' which 'seem strange' to you, and that these arise principally, at least, from overlooking the first principles of Congregationalism.

It will be seen, I trust, that after all you have said to overthrow *ecclesiastical* authority (which is derived from Christ, the Head of the Church), it would, on the same principle, equally overthrow all *civil* authority. But it is vain to make such sweeping inferences. I doubt not, both the civil and ecclesiastical power will remain, notwithstanding some 'misdeeds and failures,' both by ecclesiastics and civilians. These authorities, as we have seen, need not necessarily interfere with each other. They move, or should move, in different spheres, and, like different elements in nature, would harmonize with and support each other, did not men attempt to draw inferences with horse power, or weigh gold and silver in scales of logic. Yes, dear Sir, the Church and ecclesiastical authority will stand, though Voltaire, the earth, and 'the gates of hell' even, should strive against them. They have already stood many a blast from the enemy, but each vain effort has been like the stormy winds upon the sturdy oak, only serving to fasten its roots more firmly among the rocks below. It is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom to his saints. The Church is dearer to Him than the apple of his eye, and he will especially stand by it in the hour of assault and trial.

I fear, dear Sir, that, unless you change your course and spirit, you will be found, at last, to have been fighting against God and his people. I do, therefore, affectionately and earnestly solicit your attention to a resurvey of this whole matter, and also to a serious and prayerful examination of the Word of God, in reference to the evidence of your hopes for eternity. You may trifle with such suggestions now, but another day may disclose to you and others the infinite folly of such derision. Believe me not to

be your enemy, because I have attempted to tell you the truth. I wish you and your Society no other harm, — yea, a similar blessing, — that the sincere and virtuous abolitionist does the slaveholder, in showing him his sin, and the path of duty, that he may repent and reform. And I hope, that, laying aside all prejudice and bitterness, you and your Society will exhibit such a spirit and such conduct, in reference to the subject in hand, as you and every true friend of the slave would wish to behold in the master. Examine, dear Sir, with candor and impartiality, all the facts and circumstances in this case, and may the Lord enable you to decide, in his fear, what is truth, and what is duty. That the blessing of Almighty God may ever rest upon you and yours, is the sincere and fervent prayer of

Your unworthy Servant,

DANIEL WIGHT, JR.

P. S. I have delayed sending this several days longer than I otherwise should, from your expected absence from town, &c. If I have used severity, I have endeavored, so far as I know myself, that it should be only the severity of truth. At this we ought not to complain. It will be understood, that our Correspondence on this subject is now 'finished.' I am satisfied it would be useless to continue it any longer, and shall not therefore consider myself under obligation to add.

Scituate, Oct. 31, 1844.

Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr.

Dear Sir: — On my return home, Saturday evening, Oct. 19th, your roll of nine sheets, closely written, and commenced Sept. 30th, was handed me at the post-office. I have been since, most of the time, absent from home, and could not give the attention to so lengthy a communication requisite to an understanding of its contents. Notwithstanding your announcement, that our Correspondence is 'finished,' I cannot refrain from setting some of the contents of the nine sheets in their proper light.

I cannot but think your quotation from the Revised Statutes as very unfortunate for your case. 'The respective churches, connected and associated in public worship with such parishes and religious societies.' (Chap. 20, sec. 3.) 'Connected and associated,' not disconnected and separated from, as was the case with your First Church. Now, Sir, examine the Revised Statutes as much as you please, you will find no provisions respecting churches, unless as connected with parishes and societies, — nothing about qualifications of church-voters, — church-meetings, or any authority given them to settle or dismiss ministers, or to make or annul a contract. A church is an association for

religious purposes *only*, and for such purposes wants no civil powers; and any exercise of such powers — such as settling or dismissing a minister — is an assumption of power not warranted by law.

As you have quoted civil law, allow me to continue to quote. 'A church has no power to contract with or settle a minister; but that power resides wholly in the parish, of which the members of the church, who are inhabitants, are a part.' (*Term Rep.* vol. 9, page 277.)

'When the majority of the members of a Congregational Church separate from the majority of the parish, the minority who remain with the parish, constitute the church in such parish, and retain the rights and property thereof.' (*Term Rep.* vol. 16, page 488.)

'A church, not connected with any congregation or religious society, has *no* legal qualities, and can exercise no control over property.' (*Term Rep.* vol. 16, page 488.)

I might continue quotations of this kind, showing that the Church-meeting which dismissed Rev. Mr. Thomas, amounted to no more than the meeting of the same number of individuals for that purpose in any or the most remote part of the State; but here is enough. 'Now *is it* evident from the above, to a demonstration, that the secession of certain persons from a *society* does not, in the least, affect their church standing,' as members of a particular church?

An attempt was made several years ago, by some, to give churches the power to settle and dismiss ministers, and otherwise control societies, contrary to law, by putting the meeting-houses in trust; the pew-holders, holding their pews, subject to a condition, that the church should have said powers, regardless of the society. An eminent jurist, at the time, denied the validity of such trust deeds, on the ground that no person could relinquish rights secured to him by the constitution, in any way so that he might not resume them at will. And I believe that the plan of trust deeds is entirely abandoned, from the general belief that, even if a person could relinquish his own constitutional rights, he could not relinquish the rights of his posterity or any others.

Permit me here to notice a misquotation from my letter. You say: 'If a church and society are two things, capable of being severed, as you say they were, years ago.' I have said or written no such thing.

But Orthodox clergymen, even, do not hold to this church power, for which you so strenuously contend, if a different doctrine better subserves their purpose. In the town of Wareham, as I am informed, some of the members of Mr. Nott's church, about one year ago, became dissatisfied with him, and called an ecclesiastical council, who recommended his dismissal. At a

church meeting, where great exertions were used on both sides to rally their forces, the male members, by one majority, voted to dismiss Mr. Nott. (By the way, are not female members properly voters in churches.) Mr. Nott, having three fourths or more of the society with him, and counting his whole church, male and female, a majority of his church, took no notice of the vote, and continued his duties as pastor. Here was a case precisely similar to Mr. Thomas's, except all the parties in Wareham were Orthodox. This state of things continued in Wareham until about a month since, when another council was called, who decided that Mr. Nott should continue as pastor, and, I believe, did not even censure him for his contumacious refusal to comply with the vote of dismissal. Now, Sir, take the civil law, as quoted above, and the Wareham case, where by ecclesiastical authority, a vote of a majority of a church was considered a nullity, and you will cease your exclamation of 'absurdity' at my assertion, 'that after their secession they had no further control,' &c.

You dislike my saying, Massasoit's grandson, instead of Philip's son,—call it 'sophistry, if nothing worse,' and go on to quote nearly a page from Bancroft, to show the suffering caused by Philip's war; and, it would seem, almost bring yourself to justify the treatment of this harmless child, and the execution and sale into slavery of many of his tribe. Look at things as they were. Here was an innocent child, grandson of Massasoit, as well as son of Philip; the tribe to which he belonged exterminated; his father killed; his mother a captive. Be the disposition of the child what it might, he had no power in any way, to injure the whites. He was in their hands, at an age when they could educate him, — form his mind as they chose. Now, is it possible, the treatment he received can be justified by a Christian? The 'ministers' were applied to, and you give at length the advice of Mr. Cotton and Mr. Arnold, in which they name from Scripture several persons (doubtless, in their opinions, not so bad as Philip), 'the children of whom were cut off by the sword of justice for the transgression of their parents, although, concerning some of those children, it be manifest that they were not capable of being actors therein.' Here, so great is your exultation, you break off before giving the 'more lenient' advice of Mr. Keith, and say, 'Here is nothing said about sending into slavery, or, indeed, whether Philip's son should be executed at all.' 'Sophistry,' indeed, 'if nothing worse!' What is the plain and obvious meaning of Messrs. Cotton and Arnold? 'The children of such offenders should be cut off by the sword of justice.' This innocent and harmless boy should be executed, because he was Philip's son! Enough of this.

But to come to the main point, in your estimation, and, as it seems, the whole cause of your claiming to be the First Church,

namely, *the funds*. You say: 'Our Trinitarian ancestors left property to the amount of some thousands of dollars, to this First Church and the Society connected with it, for the support of their religion, which we have seen is something so diametrically opposite to Unitarianism. This fund was left principally, if not entirely, near a century before Calvinism lost the ascendency in the town,' and you add, 'It is doubted whether you will openly dare go so far [as the slaveholders] in support of your claim to our funds.' Truly modest. Again. 'Now, is there no morality, or rather immorality, in snatching the children's bread, left by their fathers, and giving it to strangers?' Once more. 'You, and others associated with you, may rest contented (so far as I am concerned)' [thank you] 'to feed on another's bread, till conscience and a sense of duty may lead you to relinquish our funds, with interest, to the First Church of Christ in Scituate and the Society connected with it.' A person ought to have strong grounds for such language as this. After this great display of modesty and unassuming meekness on your part, I am constrained to say, as appears by records, First, — the First Church, as such, never exercised or had any control, management, or direction whatever of the funds, as they would have done had they owned them; and never claimed them, or thought of claiming them, so far as is known until after the 'eleven' joined the church. 'Our funds!' Secondly, — the First Parish, as such, *bought* part of the funds, and, from the earliest times, always possessed, managed, and controlled them, — sold and gave deeds, from time to time, as the money was wanted for parish purposes. 'Our funds!' You might just as well claim the Bank of England as 'our funds.'

But you say the funds were left by Trinitarians, — you are Trinitarians, therefore they are yours. Why these funds, more than any others, left by Trinitarians in the State? And why do you take this one particular tenet as the one to give you a title? There were others considered by our ancestors equally important, many of them so nice that I cannot quote them, without turning to history, and which Calvinists of the present day do not believe.

Mr. Deane, in his 'History,' says: 'The first settlers of Scituate were men of intelligence and education.' They were, then, doubtless, of the opinion of the worthy Robinson, as expressed to the Pilgrims in his farewell sermon, when they were about to leave Holland for America. Said he: 'I charge you before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed Churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will, at present, go no further than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great

and shining lights in their times; yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech you, remember it, — 't is an article of your church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God.' With such views, probably, the part of the funds left by individuals were given, and the donors, if now living, would rejoice to receive the 'more truth,' which 'has broke out of his Holy Word.'

As to the 'majority.' You come out with two certificates, procured since you commenced the roll of nine sheets. To one of them you are welcome. Mr. Vinal was a worthy man. I was often at his house, before he went to the almshouse, and before his mind was impaired, and never heard any one of the liberal party express themselves so strongly on church matters, against the course pursued by the seceding party, as I have heard him. Since then, as I am informed, his mind is, in a measure, gone, and he, perhaps, would sign almost any certificate you wanted. I took numbers from your 'Manual,' supposing it correct, in that particular; which, if these certificates are to be relied on, appears not to be the case. But, to make this matter short, as I have other things to notice, and do not intend to cover nine sheets, I say that, even if I admit the certificates, your plural, in your preface, should give place to the singular. Instead of 'two or three' false statements, you make no attempt to sustain more than one.

I should understand, from the general tenor of your communication, that churches and church members were about the only subjects worthy of note in this world. 'Parishes and societies are something *added*, not the original root.' I cannot, myself, think that church membership, without the practice of the Christian virtues, is very valuable. If I am a member of a church, and am deficient in love and charity, — fail in my duties to my fellow-men and to my God, will church membership save me? Or, suppose I believe in all the articles named in your roll, commencing with 'total depravity,' and ending with 'the absolute eternity of future punishment!' and was otherwise a suitable person for a church member, should offer myself to your Church, and they, by a major vote, reject me, would this vote exclude me from heaven? Far be it from me to discourage any one who, from a sense of duty, or as a means of greater purity of life, wishes to join a church; but, for myself, I cannot but think that substance is more than form, — the practice of the Christian virtues more than the profession only.

You are much mistaken, in supposing me prejudiced against those who differ from me, 'especially if ministers.' Be sure, I do not think that the study of divinity and being ordained as a minister makes *more* than a man of any one; but I could name some

ministers of the Baptists, whom I highly esteemed, and have the vanity to think I stood well in their estimation; and some of your predecessors — one, in particular — stood very high in my opinion as a man and a Christian. I used, occasionally, to attend his meetings, and, although he was strictly a Calvinist, had love and charity for others, — firmly, but charitably, maintained his doctrines, but did not condemn others; did not call himself 'the faithful,' or think himself infallible, like his Holiness of Rome, — was in every respect, as I thought, a most worthy man.

I have not noticed your wholesale condemnation of me, personally. A bigotted Catholic priest might, and probably would, do the same by you, because you differ from him in a few particulars; but would *his* condemnation harm *you?* I might also retort, and refer you to Luke xviii. 11, 12, and say, 'I fear' you are there described. I might advise you to read the Sermon on the Mount, and ask if you possess the virtues there inculcated, or, in your own phraseology, 'fear' you do not possess them? I might inquire of you, if *your* Bible contains the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, and, if it does, whether you ever read it? But I will do no such thing. To your own Master you stand or fall. I am not your judge.

You say: 'It is no new thing for evil-doers to charge severity upon the faithful, because they declare unto them their sins.' 'At such times, nothing is more common than to claim for themselves a large share of liberality and charity.' Now, Sir, in no part of the religious exercises conducted by the truly worthy, and, I believe, truly good man, whose ministry I attend, can I more sincerely join, than in his prayers for 'our fellow-Christians worshipping by our sides.' Not 'errorists,' or any other bad epithet, but 'our fellow-Christians.' If this makes an evil-doer, I am one.

I should like to glance at some other remarks of yours, but have not space.

Respectfully,

JOHN B. TURNER.

A

REVIEW

OF THE

AFOREGOING CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter of Ebenezer Bailey, Deacon of the First Church, and Clerk of the First Parish in Scituate, to John B. Turner, Esq.

Scituate, March 4, 1845.

John B. Turner, Esq.

Dear Sir:—I have lately seen a publication, entitled 'An Ecclesiastical Controversy; containing the Correspondence between Hon. John B. Turner, member of the First Parish, and Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr., Pastor of the First Church of Christ in Scituate, Mass.' I would respectfully inquire, whether Rev. Mr. Wight, who is supposed to be the author of the publication, obtained your permission to publish your letters, and, if so, whether he applied for permission to annex such notes to them as he thought proper. In his preface, he says, 'The notes were not contained in the original letters, but have been since appended; not, however, because the points were left defenceless and weak on the side of the "Church," but that the truth might be more fully illustrated and speedily established'!

The principal points he attempts to establish appear to be the following:—

1. 'False statements,' made by Rev. Mr. Deane, in giving an account of 'the separation,' in his 'History of Scituate.'

2. That Rev. Mr. Thomas was properly dismissed as Pastor of the First Church in Scituate, in April, 1825.

3. That the true First Church of Christ, in Scituate, is the Church connected with the Trinitarian Congregational Society, of which he styles himself the 'pastor.'

4. That the Trinitarians who withdrew have a moral and just claim to the funds (a part or the whole) now in the hands of the First Parish in Scituate.

1. In regard to the 'false statements' alleged against Rev. Mr. Deane's account of the 'separation,' for saying, 'But, not having a majority of the Church, and having less than one-fourth of the Parish, which were ready to favor their views at that time, they seceded, and formed a new society.' That it was generally understood, at the time, that they had 'not a majority,' and has been so understood ever since, by those best acquainted with all the facts connected with the case, I believe no one will pretend to deny. If they had 'a majority,' so far as they had any legal character in the Church, they could do anything that they wished to do, that was lawful and just. Why, then, did they withdraw? The reason is obvious: they had not 'a majority.'

It has been said that some of the Trinitarians, who united with the Church in May, 1823, did it for the purpose of trying to obtain a majority, so as to enable them to introduce some innovation into the Church, either in the form of a new covenant, acknowledging the doctrine of the Trinity, or in making a new use of an old one, which was subsequently found on the Church records. Their object undoubtedly was, to obtain a majority in the Church, and to maintain it, by excluding those from it who thought differently from them on the subject of the Trinity; knowing, as they probably did, that more than three-fourths of the Society were of a different opinion. (Since writing the above, I have been informed, by a professed Trinitarian, that their object was as above related, and, in addition thereto, to effect a discharge of the then Pastor of the Church and Society; but, not being able to obtain their object, they seceded.)

According to the statement in the 'Manual,' the whole number of male members of the Church, previous to the 'separation,' was twenty-four, if we count one among them (which we are not disposed to do), who had not had any connection with the Church or Society since the year 1787, being a period of thirty-eight years. But, if he is counted at all, he must be counted with those who remained, as he did not formally withdraw until nearly two years afterwards.

Nine of them, whose names follow, withdrew April 15, 1825, and assisted in forming a new Society, which they called the 'Trinitarian Congregational Society in Scituate.'

Dea. Israel Litchfield, Roland Litchfield, Charles Curtis, Levi Vinal, Eleazer Peakes, Ward Litchfield, Calvin Jenkins, James Jenkins, Jacob Vinal.

Two others, James Turner and Augustus Cole, withdrew the next day, April 16, 1825, and joined the Episcopalians in Hanover.

The above are all the male members of the Church that withdrew in the year 1825.

If the Church consisted of twenty-three male members in April, 1825, and nine joined the Trinitarians in Scituate, and two went to the Episcopalians in Hanover, then twelve remained in the same position and standing which they occupied previous to the separation.

The following is a list of their names:—

Rev. Nehemiah Thomas, Deacon Seth Merritt, Paul Merritt, Hayward Peirce, Reuben Bates, Robert Ellms, Samuel Jenkins, Simeon Vinal, Chandler Clapp, John Studley, Cyrus Dunbar, Howard White.

Mr. White, who figures in a certificate in Mr. Wight's long letter, and, as he says, 'approved of the dismission of Mr. Thomas, and would have voted for it had he been present,' was, after this, chosen a deacon of Mr. Thomas's Church, and filled that office nearly two years, before he left the Society.

Now, I think Rev. Mr. Deane was correct in saying, that 'they,' the Trinitarians, 'not having a majority of the Church, and having less than one-fourth of the Parish, which were ready to favor their views *at that time*, seceded, and formed a new Society.'

It appears, from certificates and records, that nine members of the Church, and seventeen other persons, members of the Parish, favored their views *at that time*, and seceded, and formed a new Society. How long the two members that joined the Episcopalians in Hanover remained there, I am unable, at present, to tell; but I believe Mr. Turner remained with them till his death, which occurred in January, 1835. Mr. Cole, I believe, has since joined the Trinitarians in Scituate. But it is immaterial how long they remained at Hanover. By going *there*, it is self-evident that they were not *here*, and, of course, cannot be viewed in the same light as they would have been if they had seceded from the First Church and Society, and immediately joined the Trinitarians in Scituate; for, if they ever joined the Trinitarians in Scituate, they joined them as Episcopalians from Hanover, and not as Congregationalists from the First Church and Society in Scituate.

2. The next point which the author of the 'Controversy' attempts to establish is, that Rev. Mr. Thomas was properly dismissed as pastor of the First Church in Scituate, in April, 1825.

Mr. Wight says, in his 'Manual,' that 'Rev. Nehemiah Thomas was dismissed April 29th, 1825.'

It will be seen, from a careful and correct examination of the subject, that the Church, at that time, contained twelve male members, as I have already shown; eleven of the twenty-three which it contained previous to the 'separation,' had, on the 15th and 16th of April, 1825, withdrawn,—two of them to Hanover, and the others, nine in number, to the Trinitarian Congregational Society in Scituate.

The annual meeting of the First Church and Society was held on Monday, April 18, 1825, *three* days after the Trinitarians had withdrawn.

The *ex parte council*, called by the Trinitarians, met on Wednesday, April 27, 1825, *twelve* days after they had withdrawn.

The Rev. Mr. Thomas, it is pretended, was dismissed by them, on Friday, April 29, 1825, *fourteen* days after they had withdrawn, and ceased to be members of the First Church and Society in Scituate; for, as I have before shown, two of them had gone to the Episcopalians in Hanover, and nine of them to the Trinitarians in Scituate.

But, if three-fourths of the members of the Church had been disposed to dismiss him, they could not have done it. How was he settled? and who made him pastor of the Church and Society? It appears, from the records of the Parish, that the *Church and Society*, in their associated capacity, *settled him*, and *made him* their pastor. 'The power alone, which makes, can unmake.'* Then the Church, if it wished to dismiss him (which it did not), could not have done it without the co-operation and assistance of the Society.

On the next Sabbath, May 1, 1825, the sacrament of the Supper was administered to the First Church of Christ in Scituate, by Rev. Mr. Thomas, its beloved and highly-esteemed pastor, as usual. And it may be well to remark, in this place, that one of the deacons, who had seceded with the Trinitarians, went to the other deacon, who remained with the majority of the Church, and commanded him not to make any preparation for the sacrament of the Supper. The worthy man paid not the least regard to the command, but made the usual preparation.

3. The next point Mr. Wight attempts to establish is, 'that the true First Church of Christ in Scituate is the Church connected with the Trinitarian Congregational Society,' of which he styles himself the 'pastor.'

As I have before stated, the Church, previous to the 'separation,' contained twenty-three male members. Two of them withdrew, and joined the Episcopalians in Hanover. Nine of them withdrew, and assisted in forming the Trinitarian Congregational Society in Scituate. And twelve remained in the same position which they occupied previous to the 'separation.'

Now, which is the true First Church of Christ in Scituate? Undoubtedly the twelve members that remained, as they performed no action in the case, nor changed their standing in the Church or Society in the least thing that can be mentioned.

It therefore appears to me, that it must be sufficiently plain to every fair and candid mind, that the true 'First Church of Christ

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* Boston Recorder, Feb. 20, 1845.

in Scituate' is the Church connected with the First Parish in Scituate.

4. Mr. Wight attempts to show that the Trinitarians have 'a moral and just claim to the funds (a part or the whole) now in the hands of the First Parish in Scituate.'

The funds in the possession of the First Parish 'originated from so many sources, that it would be tedious to trace out the whole.'* Donations and grants of land made by the Town, and by the Conihasset Company, together with donations made by Mr. Hatherly and others, constitute the principal sources whence they originated. They were commonly denominated 'The Parsonage,' or 'The Parsonage Lands and Buildings.'

In June, 1803, the Legislature of this Commonwealth passed 'An Act to authorize the North Parish in Scituate, in the County of Plymouth, to sell certain lands given for the use of the Ministry *in said Parish*, and to incorporate certain persons as Trustees to manage the funds that may be raised by said sale for the permanent support of the Gospel Ministry *in said Parish*.' In this Act, it is provided, 'that Hayward Peirce, James Little, Augustus Clapp, Calvin Peirce, and Seth Merritt, all of said Scituate, be, and they are hereby appointed and incorporated Trustees, for the due management of the fund that shall arise from said sale, to receive and hold the same in trust for the use and benefit of said Parish, and the permanent support of a Gospel Minister therein; and shall constitute a body politic and corporate to have perpetual succession, consisting of persons belonging to said Parish,' &c. And it is further provided, that the Trustees are to place the funds 'at interest on good security, at their discretion, and apply the whole, or so much as may be necessary, of the interest arising therefrom, to pay the salary of such minister as aforesaid, as the majority of the Church and Congregation *in said Parish* have or may settle, but not in any case to lessen or make use of any part of the principal.'

The parsonage lands were sold in the year 1803, excepting those on which the 'building' stood, 'and those adjoining, on the east side of the road, and a small piece over the brook.'

In February, 1807, the Parish voted to sell 'all the remaining part of the parsonage lands and buildings,' and chose agents to carry the same into effect.

The parsonage lands and buildings were thus sold in the years 1803 and 1807, and the proceeds thereof placed at interest, and the interest applied, as the law directs, 'for the use and benefit of *said Parish*, and for the permanent support of a Gospel Minister therein, such as the majority of the Church and Congregation *in said Parish* have or may settle.'

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* History of Scituate, p. 34.

These funds have been in the quiet and peaceable possession of the 'First Parish' from time immemorial. Has any other body, corporate or unincorporate, any claim to them? I think not. But it is said that a part of them were given to 'the Church.' If they *were*, they undoubtedly were given to the *First Church*. That Church, as we have seen, is, and ever will be, a part of the *First Parish*.

Mr. Wight quotes from the History of Scituate, and says the 'farm was given to the Church.' That may be; but did the Church take possession? It is known, as your correspondence states, 'that the First Church, as such, never exercised or had any control, management, or direction whatever of the funds, as they would have done had they owned them.'

The funds were given for the support of the Gospel Ministry *in the First Parish in Scituate*. Every person belonging to this Parish has an undoubted right to the benefit of that ministry. If, from choice, any neglect to be benefitted by it, the loss is their own. The Trinitarians, and others who withdrew in 1825, did it from choice. The same Gospel, that of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, was preached, that had been preached in this Parish for nearly two centuries. Whatever difference of opinion may have at any time existed, in regard to the minor and unessential points of doctrine, the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel, as taught by our blessed Saviour while here on earth, have remained essentially the same.

I have thus hastily examined the four principal points which the Rev. Mr. Wight attempts to establish in his 'Church Manual' and 'Correspondence.' And it is needless for me to inform you, that I think he has not been able to establish one of them. There are many other statements he has made, that appear to be based on a precarious foundation, but I have not leisure to examine them so thoroughly, as I should like to do, and must close this communication, which has already been drawn to much greater length than was originally intended.

Yours, respectfully,
EBENEZER BAILEY.

Letter of John B. Turner, Esq., to Dea. Ebenezer Bailey.

Scituate, March 7, 1845.

Dea. Ebenezer Bailey.

Dear Sir: — Your letter came duly to hand, and I in reply to your questions say, that Mr. Wight never asked my consent to publish the correspondence between us, or in any way consulted me about

its publication; nor after it was published did the pedlar who went from house to house to peddle the book come near me, until about a fortnight after he commenced his perigrinations, and I am beholden to a friend who was so kind as to lend me his, for an opportunity to examine it. What he says in justification of such conduct in his preface renders the matter still worse. The reasons there given, are, that I 'virtually acknowledge the false statements in my last, but say nothing about joining in the publication, &c.' His nine sheet production was received Oct. 19. My last, containing, as he says, this acknowledgment, is dated Oct. 31. He could not then have known while writing his long communications of the acknowledgment, or that I would say nothing about joining him in the publication. On page twenty-eight in this letter, received twelve days before the date of my last, he says; 'were you the only person for whom I may be writing, I might at once throw down my pen,' because my ignorance was such, that I was beneath the notice of a mind like his; and after this declaration continues on over about seven sheets more. And afterwards, 'If you and I cannot decide, the public must.' These avowals that he was writing for others, — the public, are under date of Sept. 30, 1844, and show that he then thought this production of his too good to be lost, — that he intended to publish when he wrote Sept. 1844. Why not then in this preface, dated Jan. 1845, honestly avow this, and not resort to such pretexts as said preface contains? As Mr. Wight truly says, 'Error is always clashing.'

A few words more before I leave this part of the subject. Do I 'virtually acknowledge' Mr. Deane's statement false? If so, when or where? I certainly never thought or intended to express any such thing. In my letter of Oct. 31, I say, 'that even if I admit your certificates, your plural in your preface [to the Manual] should give place to the singular. Instead of 'two or three false statements,' you make no attempt to sustain but one.' Is this 'virtually acknowledging the false statements;' or is it saying, *even if I should admit* your certificates, still you fail to make out your charges? But my letter will show, that I had no reliance on the certificates, — and gave reasons why; which subsequent developments, and extracts you make from the records have shown to be much stronger than I stated them.

You ask if Mr. Wight applied for permission to annex such notes to my letters as he thought proper. He never applied for any such permission. If he had, I most certainly should have objected in the strongest terms against the publication of notes containing such malign and bitter invectives against all who differ in opinion from Mr. Wight. The Judges of the Supreme Court, all Unitarians, including of course Dr. Channing, and hundreds and thousands of others of the great and good (and I rejoice he has put me in such good company) are here stigmatized and traduced.

'*Unitarians, of course, and Parkerism, and Socialism, and open Infidelity, and what not!*' At this point language fails him, — contains no terms of reproach sufficiently strong. I must say that, in my opinion, these notes 'harmonize beautifully' with his publishing our correspondence in the manner he has, and the unwarrantable and unnecessary attack on the characters of Mr. Thomas and Mr. Deane contained in his Manual. What connection is there between the purposes of a Manual and the attempt to injure the fair character of others, of high worth and standing?

With feelings of the deepest regret, I saw the attack on the veracity of Mr. Deane, and the attempts to injure the character of Mr. Thomas, in the Manual. What benefit could possibly come to any person or thing from such a procedure? None. On the contrary, the feelings of their friends were needlessly wounded thereby. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Deane were both of them with us many years, and well known. And you and others will bear me out in saying, that whoever knew them was their friend. Was it then any part of the 'delightful duties,' [see preface to the correspondence] of Mr. Wight to make this attack, and thereby call up anew, feelings which the gospel of love teaches to suppress? I will here quote from the character of Mr. Thomas, as correctly given in the history of Scituate, page 404, being so 'diametrically opposed' to what appears of Mr. Wight. 'He was not given to controversy; he never aimed at the notoriety of attacking the faith of others; while be practised no arts to conceal his own.'

The charge against Mr. Deane, I thought ought not to pass without notice. I therefore for my own satisfaction, — to know what reasons Mr. Wight could assign to justify himself in making the charge,—commenced the correspondence. Had I had any idea of this publication since made, I might have hesitated, knowing the fact, that my business being with the plough and hoe, and his with the pen, he had great advantages over me. Still another great advantage it seems Mr. Wight had. He wrote with time, care, and labor, intending to publish. You will see by dates, that he took more than a month to prepare his long letter, and you will see by the letter itself, that it is a matter of research and study. I wrote as opportunity offered, with little care and research, not thinking of publishing; took numbers and dates from his Manual, which you show to be entirely incorrect; instead of the 12 and 12 in the manual, I might have examined the parish records in your possession and found the 12 and 9 you mention. I might have prepared certificates and driven over the country begging signatures, but had no inclination or time for such purposes. But take the letters as they are, strip them of the fog and mist he has endeavored to throw over them by notes and comments, consider the advantages and disadvantages above-mentioned, and judge them yourself.

In Mr. Wight's letter of Aug. 23, as I read it, he charges Mr.

Deane with making the four following false statements, which I will number, perhaps not in the precise order in which they are made.

1. Saying they became desirous of forming a covenant, &c.

2. Saying that the church had from time immemorial been Unitarian, at least not Trinitarian, or using language to lead others to this belief.

3d. Time of formation.

4. Saying 'not having a majority.'

Now take his letter of Sept. 30, and what do we find to support these charges? Why, mixed up with abuse of me (or what he would consider abuse if applied to him), sneers at 'Unitarian judges' and their decisions, extracts from the laws for governing the militia when in actual service, and sundry and various other matters and things 'too numerous to mention,' we find a feeble attempt to justify the *first*, hardly noticeable, the *second and third* abandoned, — not even mentioned, and his whole force spent on the last. His main reliance to support the last, is, the two certificates of Mr. White and Mr. Vinal. The weight of these depends, in a great measure, on the circumstances under which they were obtained, and the character of the men who certify. Are they men likely to yield to persuasion and importunity? I learn from a son of one of the certifiers (and I get this without going a single step out of my way), that his father told him that 'Mr. Wight so importuned him, that he finally signed, he hardly knew what, and that he [the father] never wanted to see Mr. Wight's face again on such business.' This much for Mr. Vinal's certificate. You inform me in your letter that 'Mr. White was chosen a Deacon of Mr. Thomas's church, and filled that office nearly two years after 'the separation.' Considering this fact, charity to Mr. White must lead us to suppose, that his certificate was obtained in some such manner as Mr. Vinal's. Every person acquainted with the men and circumstances will judge for himself. For myself, I cannot think certificates so obtained strengthen any cause, and that Mr. Wight's majority is not made out by them.

Had Mr. Wight condescended to ask my consent to the publication, I should most certainly have refused. Not from any wish to interfere with the profits of the speculation; Mr. Wight and his pedlar may share them as they please; but from the circumstances under which the Letters were written, before alluded to, and from the belief that this publication, like the Manual, tends to revive and increase former rancor and ill-will, and also to create new feelings of the same kind. Mr. Wight, in his letters and notes, attacks almost every body and every thing differing from him. Cuts and slashes right and left, — front and rear, — among the living and the dead. Judges, clergymen, and laymen all fare alike. All who have the presumption to think differently from his

established standard, either on law or religion, are bespattered with the same opprobrious epithets. Even our worthy Mr. Sewall, a man whose whole life and conversation is love and good-will to men of every sect and name, comes in for a full share. On reading Note B. page 52 and 53, I must confess I was much surprised, although somewhat prepared not to be surprised at anything coming from Mr. Wight. Fancy yourself present at the scene where Mr. Wight catechizes Mr. Sewall! Mr. Wight catechizing Mr. Sewall!! Must not this appear to every one acquainted with the character and standing of the two, as most supremely ridiculous?

As I have written to Mr. Sewall requesting a statement of facts referred to in this note, and expect a reply from him, I will pass this remarkable note with only a few observations. Here is a certificate again, signed by several. Whether this, like the others before referred to, was written, and the persons signed their names to escape importunity, I do not know. Will the signers say the statement, that Mr. Sewall's conduct in this affair, illustrated the fable of the dog in the manger, is 'impartial and correct?' If they really think so, I must be permitted to tell them they *know not the man*. Mr. Sewall is directly the reverse of this. His failing (if failing it be), is excess of love and charity for those who differ from him, and any one who knows him, knows that he would cordially unite with any one, in any work to promote peace on earth and good will to man, — love to God and obedience to his laws — and the instruction and happiness of the human family. The probability is, that the note and certificate were prepared by Mr. Wight, and, on his persuasion, signed by these gentlemen without much 'personal information' in the case, and without fully considering the contents. The facility with which names are obtained to almost anything, where the signer has little or no personal interest, is illustrated by the following anecdote, quite current in this region. When the petition for the New Bedford turnpike was before the committee of the legislature, the petitioners brought forward a long list of names in its favor, and urged its weight. 'Why ——,' said the opposing counsel, 'names are easily obtained by zeal and persuasion, and in two days' time I could get as many names to have you hung.' I hope Mr. Wight will attempt nothing of this kind. In this same note, page 52, Mr. Wight says: 'The schoolhouse in this district had been closed for years against all religious meetings.' On page 54, 'Rev Mr. Sewall has never preached in this schoolhouse before or since this difficulty, though the house has been open for years for such an object since his settlement here.' 'Error is always clashing.'

You have gone so fully into the 'majority' question, and so fully and incontrovertibly proved from the parish records (which have been so long in your keeping), the numbers of Mr. Thomas's

Church, and the Trinitarian Church at the time of separation to be 12 and 9, and that Mr. Wight's Church, even on the majority principle, has not the least claim to the name *First Church*, I should suppose every one must be convinced from what you say, even should we (in opposition to the constitution and laws of 'Old Massachusetts)' admit all the powers claimed by Mr. Wight for churches. If the majority are entitled to the name, you show conclusively who should hold it. Suppose the two who left on the 16th had claimed to be the true First Church, and should say to the nine, Gentlemen, when you left the Church and Society, you had only nine out of twenty-three, — far from a majority of the Church. When we left the next day, we were two out of fourteen, — to be sure not a majority of fourteen, any more than your nine was of twenty-three; but if the principle, that the majority holds the name is abandoned (as it must be for you to hold it), our claim to the name and funds is as good as yours. If the majority left by you and us cannot properly hold the name, we as well as you claim it. Would not Mr. Wight, in this case, say how 'absurd' the claim of the two? But would it be much more absurd than for the nine to make the claim? Or for the minister of the nine to style himself 'Pastor of the First Church?' Both claims, of the nine and of the two, must fail, even if a majority is necessary to give a title to the name. But the law at the time said, '*those who remain constitute the Church.*' Your reply to the question, 'which is the true First Church?' cannot be controverted. Still as Mr. Wight's whole fabric, — his First Church, — 'our funds,'— his sneers and sarcasms, — must all fall unless he can maintain his majority, his Church title, and Church powers, I may add some observations hereafter on said subjects.

I find my last letter to Mr. Wight thrust into his appendix, printed in small type, and so encumbered and overloaded with notes in a large type, that I can hardly find it. This is the only book that ever met my eye, with the text in smaller type than the notes. Here is sometimes one line, and sometimes two of letter on a page, and the remainder notes, evidently showing that his intent and meaning was, to overshadow the letter, — to distract the mind of the reader, so that the substance may be lost. The notes are many of them too puerile to notice, — of no use unless as fog or mist. It actually seems to me on reading them, that the author thought whatever *he* wrote, would be unhesitatingly received as law and gospel, be it what it might.

Let us examine some of these notes. On page 61, in my letter is the following: 'Not disconnected and separated from as was the case with your First Church.' On this is the following note; 'My correspondent himself testifies that there was a certificate in the hands of the Parish clerk, certifying that they had formed themselves into another society.' This is dated April 15th, 1825.

'Error is always clashing!' Now if the First Church had withdrawn from the *old* society and formed a *new* one, they could proceed to dismiss their own pastor, as such, in harmony with both civil and ecclesiastical authority.' What is the meaning of all this? This is followed on the same and succeeding pages, by squibs levelled at me for quoting decisions of the Supreme Court as law, and denouncing said decisions as 'inconsistent with Scripture,' evidently of 'sectarian character,' and as 'inapplicable or unjust.'

Mr. Wight knows, or ought to know, that a decision of the Supreme Court, — the construction of the constitution and laws by the constitutional tribunal, — is in effect the law of the land, as much as if enacted by the legislature. The decision says, 'When the majority of the Church separate from the majority of the parish, the minority who remain with the parish constitute the Church in that parish, and retain the rights and property thereof.' Those who remained then, retained *all the rights* possessed by the whole before separation, even when a minority only remained. Amongst other *rights*, the *right* to the name *First Church*. The persons referred to as withdrawing, were members of the said First Church and parish until April, 1825, when they by their own act withdrew from both. They certify that they withdrew from the parish, and the *law* at that time says, the consequence of their withdrawing destroys their connection with that Church. 'Those who remain constitute the Church.' This would have been the standing, even if as Mr. Wight claims, a majority had withdrawn; but this you show conclusively was not the case. 'Nine to the new society, two to Hanover, and twelve remaining with the First Parish.'

After 'they had withdrawn from the *old* society and formed a *new* one,' no one doubts the new society (not the church) could settle or dismiss their own pastor. The quotation made by Mr. Wight, from the Revised Statutes, gives no church 'privileges and liberties,' except *where* 'connected and associated in public worship,' and the nine were 'connected and associated' neither with the first parish or the parish at Cohassett. They had no more power in either parish, than in any other to which they did not belong. 'They might therefore with as much propriety dismiss Mr. Flint, of Cohassett, as Mr. Thomas.' They were 'connected and associated' with neither of their societies, and as respects the new society, both stood on the same ground. I wish here to call your attention to Mr. Wight's letter of Sept. 30, where he says, 'How absurd then is your assertion &c.' and tell me *who* is so absurd.

The constitution, under which the Supreme Judges made the decisions I quoted in my last letter to Mr. Wight, and which are so displeasing to him, is as follows.

'Provided notwithstanding, that the several towns, parishes, and other bodies-politic or religious societies, shall at all times have

the exclusive right of electing their public teachers, and of contracting with them for their support and maintenance.'

What power is here given to churches? None. If the constitution — the supreme law, alike binding on judges, legislators and ecclesiastics, whether Unitarian or Trinitarian — gives the *exclusive right* to parishes and religious societies to settle or dismiss their ministers, can judges, legislators, or ecclesiastics even, take this right from them, and give it to churches? Certainly not. This fundamental law was enacted by the people of 'Old Massachusetts' themselves in 1780. It is not lately got up for 'sectarian' purposes. If it clashes with what Mr. Wight is pleased to call 'ecclesiastical laws,' which *must and ought* to prevail? The Supreme Judges were bound to, and did give this law in their decisions, a plain, commonsense interpretation. The only interpretation possible for any one to give, without a most palpable perversion of plain language.

'But these decisions have not generally been acquiesced in and *will not* be.' In his letter of Sept. 30, he says, 'Such laws of the land will not always remain. While they do, however, I will endeavor to submit, as a worthy citizen and Christian minister. I revere the laws and authority of Old Massachusetts, &c.' Please compare the two positions. 'I revere the *laws and authority* of Old Massachusetts,' and 'these decisions [laws in fact] *have not been and will not be acquiesced in.*' 'Error is always clashing!' He might have omitted the expression of patriotic feeling on page 38 and 39 of his publication, and some 'indignation' remarks on page 47. The whole is mere declamation. The whole tenor of this publication on Mr. Wight's part, is an endeavor to put something called by him ecclesiastical law, above the constitution and laws of 'Old Massachusetts.'

As to the prophecy that 'such laws will not always remain,' I suppose most will join with him. Millerites have thought they would have come to an end before now. But probabilities of their being altered by legal authority are certainly small. The decisions were made more than twenty years ago — I believe unanimously — no judge dissenting. Since then this very article of the fundamental law, has been revised by the people — the only competent tribunal, who made no alteration in this particular, and it now stands in strict accordance with said decisions — 'with the Bible and common sense.'

Page 64. In my letter I notice a misquotation. 'You say if a church and society are two things capable of being severed as you say they were years ago.' 'I have said or written no such thing.' This Mr. Wight says in this note, 'is a mere quibble.' Let any person of common sense take what I said and this note, and say *who* quibbles. What I said was, 'the cord between church and state was severed years ago.' And the note implies, if it means

any thing, that the state and a society are one and the same thing. 'For a society is a mere creature of the state,' therefore, a religious or any other society *is the state!* Prodigious! And this from a man who applies 'sophistry if nothing more' and 'a mere quibble' to me! 'I leave others to judge' of this.

Page 65. He 'is authorized to say my statement' of the Wareham case 'is essentially incorrect.' A false statement, again. Since I saw this note, business brought me in company with a Wareham gentleman, too well known in Plymouth County as a man of truth and honor to be doubted. I handed him a copy of my statement of the Wareham case, and asked him as to its correctness. After a careful examination he pronounced it *correct.* He carried the copy to Wareham, and has since written me that he read it to one of Mr. Nott's church, — a man of standing, who pronounced it to be *correct.* I therefore feel 'authorized to say,' Mr. Wight to the contrary notwithstanding, that my statement *is essentially correct.* If there is any error, it is in detail, not interfering with the fact that Mr. Nott continued as Pastor, notwithstanding a vote of a majority of the male members of his church, and this course was afterwards justified, at least not censured, by an orthodox ecclesiastical council.

Page 67. 'Either Mr. Deane or Col. Turner has made a false statement.' This seems quite a favorite expression with Mr. Wight — his current coin — always applicable and in order. I might even think its use one of 'his delightful duties.' I said the funds were always under the control of the parish. You confirm this, and does Mr. Deane say any thing different?

In the same note, 'Churches have remained bodies corporate from that time [time of the grants] to the present, as may be seen by all the *acts* passed on the subject, including the present Revised Statutes (see page 76).' On turning to page 76, not of the Revised Statutes, but of this publication, I find a quotation from the Revised Statutes, which says, 'The *Deacons, Churchwardens,* and other *similar officers* of all Churches or religious societies shall [for purposes named] be deemed bodies corporate.' *Not* that the Churches shall be bodies corporate, or shall be so deemed. Besides the term Churches, as here used, is evidently used in a sense denoting sect, rather than what we in the Congregational order understand by the term Church, amongst us. The Episcopal Church, the Catholic Church, not the First Church in Scituate.

Are Churches bodies corporate? One of the decisions I quoted in my last letter to Mr. Wight and which he says, 'does not touch our case in the least,' says 'a Church not connected with any congregation or religious society has *no legal qualities.*' To suppose a corporation with 'no legal qualities,' would be like supposing a fire without heat, or an ocean without water. I would by no means be understood as saying Mr. W.'s legal knowledge was

less than the legal knowledge of the Supreme Judges — perhaps some who read his remarks on the judicial decisions, will think it superior — still the constitution happens to make the judges a tribunal to say what the laws are, and they were required officially to examine 'all the acts passed on the subject,' before making the above decisions. Mr. Wight is not so situated, and therefore I must rely on their decisions in preference to his. Churches then are not corporations, nor is it in the power of the legislature to make them such, for any purpose opposite to the provisions of the constitution.

Page 68. 'Bought part of the funds!' 'Probably, as Mr. Deane says, in 1701 they sold, &c.' Can this come from one with any pretence of fairness about him? One who accuses me of sophistry, quibbling, and falsehood? On page 34 of Mr. Deane's history is the following: 'The society became successors to President Chauncy *by purchase* of Israel Chauncy,' and *only two lines* below commence the words he has quoted, 'in 1701, &c.' Why not make a fair quotation, and spare his sneers and notes of exclamation? I leave you to assign his reasons.

Page 74, note 3d, 'Though gross idolaters and what not, it is all alike our fellow Christians! No matter evidently what a man believes, provided he be sincere! With some, he is our fellow Christian, though he deny the Bible, and even the Lord that made him!' How bad a man must feel when language is not sufficiently virulent to express his feelings.

I will leave the notes and just glance at the question, 'Whether the Orthodox or Unitarians have the moral and just claim to the funds.' What moral and just claim have those who withdrew and formed the Trinitarian society, above those who withdrew and formed the Baptist society, or the Methodist society? The Baptists are Trinitarians, and may properly claim President Chauncy as one of their denomination. Their creed probably comes much nearer his than does the creed of the Orthodox society. The Methodists are also Trinitarians, — the tenet on which Mr. W. principally founds his claim. Are not their moral and just claims to 'our funds' equal to his? But he will not admit this, because 'Our Trinitarian ancestors left property to the amount of some thousands of dollars to *this* First Church and the society connected with it.' Have *two* persons who leave the First Parish a juster claim to 'our funds,' or a distributive part thereof, than *one*? If not, have twenty, or even twenty-six? But Mr. Wight objects to scattering 'our funds,' as we should do, if we paid each person who leaves the First Parish his *pro rata* share of them; for he says, 'You and others associated with you may rest contented (so far as I am concerned) to feed on another's bread, till conscience and a sense of duty may lead you to relinquish our funds with interest to the First Church of Christ in Scituate, and

the society connected with it.' Our funds then with interest must then be kept safe till this time.

Even suppose, as Mr. Wight contends, 'our funds' at the time of the separation belonged to the Church (mind I do not 'virtually acknowledge' this). 'The majority constitutes the only legitimate power.' Have the *nine* who joined the Trinitarian society a juster claim than the *twelve* who remained?

But you mention and quote from a law of 'Old Massachusetts' enacted more than forty years ago, — before the formation of either of the other societies, and while the members of them then living, were members of the First Parish, if living within its territorial bounds. Did any person or persons, who have since seceded, *oppose* the passage of this law, confining the use of said funds *exclusively* to the First or North Parish? Did any *one* of them feel aggrieved at the passage of this law, 'Snatching the children's bread left by their fathers, and giving it to strangers?' We do not hear that any of the seceders objected,or even thought it would have this 'snatching' effect. So far were any of them from condemning it, until about the time of their secession, that I believe some who have since been members of the Trinitarian society have been trustees of the fund in the First Parish. Did the Church, connected with the First Parish at the time of this enactment, intimate any claim to the property as theirs? Or did any single Church-member, as is known, even think of the thing? Or was any claim of the kind ever mentioned, until *after* the 'eleven' joined the Church, and had begun to find out, that even did enough join to make a majority of the Church, they could not dismiss the minister and settle another of their own particular views, in opposition to three-fourths of the parish? All, who are acquainted with the circumstances, will readily answer these questions negatively.

On reading what I have written, you may think I have used too severe expressions to a clergyman. But are they any more so than the clergyman has applied to me and others? He certainly ought not to think that his office gives him an exclusive right to use such language. Besides, after publishing my letters in the manner he has, he cannot reasonably expect any great marks of deference and respect from me. To say nothing of his treatment of clergymen of this town, both living and dead, in my opinion at least as worthy and good as himself, can he, after thus publicly accusing me of sophistry, quibbling, and falsehood, expect I shall thank him for treating me no worse? You will perceive that my remarks are chiefly confined to him as disclosed to me in this controversy, and in refutation of his remarks. Towards the Trinitarian society I have no hard feelings. I sincerely wish them prosperity and peace. I believe the good feelings which had existed between the two societies were agreeable to the most of them, and I cannot but think the publication of the Manual and the correspon-

dence, so far as it interrupts peace and harmony, is regretted by them as well as me.

'But further quotations and arguments are unnecessary. It is believed the candid and impartial reader of the foregoing correspondence will be prepared to decide, first,' that the charge of falsehood made by Mr. Wight against Mr. Deane 'has *not* been sustained,' but the contrary established. 'Secondly, that Rev. Mr. Thomas was' *not* 'regularly dismissed as Pastor of the First Church in Scituate,' but continued in connection with it until his decease. 'Thirdly, that those who dismissed him' had no more power or right to do so, than nine of the Church with which you are connected have to dismiss Rev. Mr. Wight. And, 'fourthly, that the First Church,' being the Church connected with the First Parish, have a legal and 'moral claim to the ancient Church records,' 'and all other exclusive Church property,' if any such there be. 'How can an honest' man, who professes respect and reverence for the constitution and laws of Old Massachusetts, 'consistently and knowingly make such a perversion' of them? 'But if my opponent' 'can hold on' upon such things, and 'that, too, with a good conscience, I will only say, Hold on, but fear!'—ridicule, at least.

With great respect,
JOHN B. TURNER.

Letter from Hon. John B. Turner to Rev. E. Q. Sewall.

Scituate, Feb. 28, 1845.

Rev. E. Q. Sewall.

Dear Sir:—In a publication containing certain letters, which passed between Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr. and myself, and published without my consent or knowledge, I find that you are unnecessarily and unceremoniously forced into the case, without the least possible reference to the matter at issue between us, and in a manner further showing the character of a man guilty of publishing letters as above stated.

You have been with us many years. We have listened to your instructions, and witnessed your life and conversation, and are rejoiced in the belief that, in anything of this kind, you are 'diametrically opposed' to Mr. Wight.

Why you are thus thrust into a controversy in which you had no part—commenced without your knowledge and closed before you exchanged a single word with me on the subject—is not avowed, but is in perfect consistency with Mr. Wight's conduct in thus publishing. The asperity and virulence of his notes and

remarks on all who differ from him—so different from what we ever hear from you, and from the charity and good-will inculcated, as I think, in the Gospel—show, as it appears to me, anything else, rather than a Christian spirit; and I feel extremely sorry to have been the means (although, I feel, innocently) of disturbing a fountain of such bitter waters.

I have no personal acquaintance with Mr. Wight. He had been settled as a minister in this town less than two years, when our correspondence commenced. With his religious tenets I had nothing to do. I judge men by their deeds, not their creeds. I have been so taught by you. I was as willing he should enjoy his religious faith unmolested, as I was to enjoy my own, provided he, as I endeavored to do, let others alone, or dealt with them as charity and Christianity require.

While things thus stood, his 'Manual' appeared, containing things calculated, and perhaps intended (as they were foreign from the purpose of a manual), to revive former animosities. I did *much regret* this. A religious controversy had, before you were settled here, raged in this parish, with many hard feelings, and for many years. Commencing before the settlement of Mr. Dawes, and continuing with small intermission until the separation, and the transactions at and about the time of separation, added, brought on a state of feeling to be deplored by all good men.

During the ministry of Rev. Mr. Thomas, some of the church members, differing in opinion from him, seldom attended his meetings, and made no attempt to conceal their dislike and opposition to him, until a short time before May, 1823, when they suddenly became very friendly. Some of them made confession to the Church, and, at the above date, *eleven others*, of similar religious faith and practice, joined the Church. Mr. Thomas, a man without guile himself, and therefore not expecting it in others, received them with open arms. Some of the Society, at the time, doubted whether their sole motive was love of '*the dear Church of their Puritan fathers*'—were suspicious of the motives for this change of conduct in men, whom some of the elder members looked upon as instrumental in hurrying their beloved Dawes to his grave—but still did not object to receive them, hoping for peace, and feeling themselves willing 'to agree to differ,' and be brethren, if they could. Shortly after this, 'the funds' began to be talked of as Church property; church discipline, a covenant, &c., were agitated, as mentioned in the correspondence, attended with feelings in which religion could have little concern.

These difficulties, and feelings attendant, had mainly subsided previous to the time Mr. Wight was settled here. The members of the two Societies had in a great measure lost their former enmity, and had begun to render each other mutual good offices.

Members of one Society would frequent the meetings of the other. When your meeting-house was under repair, the Trinitarian Society kindly gave us the use of their house for meetings, which was gratefully acknowledged and praised by you, in an original hymn at the dedication of your meeting-house; and you, in case of indisposition, employed a gentleman who was or had been a minister of the other Society—a Calvinist—to preach in your pulpit, with the universal approbation of your Society; and you, Sir, I presume by request of some of the other Society, officiated at funerals, both in their meeting-house, and in their private houses. This standing of things was very pleasing to me, and in accordance with what I hear you preach; and with deep regret I saw the publication which I felt would interrupt it, coming as it did from a young man who had hardly got a foothold with us.

I thought Mr. Wight's attack on the veracity of Mr. Deane, a man so generally respected where known, was altogether unwarrantable, entirely useless to him, his society or cause, and such as a man of Mr. Wight's standing, unless excessively vain, would hesitate to make, and which ought not to pass unnoticed. I accordingly commenced the correspondence with him, little thinking his vanity, or something worse, would lead him to publish it without consulting me, or in any way using it to increase the bad feelings caused by his 'Manual.'

I admit that I feel such treatment. His reckless abuse, in his notes and remarks, I care little for. His condemning me as an infidel, troubles me not. He has not the power of the holy inquisition, although I think he shows the spirit. I might have supposed my years would have shielded me from such things from him; but, as you and many others, every way my superiors, come in for a share in common with me, I complain not. But I do complain, when a man, styled a clergyman, violates what even raging politicians hold sacred, and uses my name with his, to make discord and division.

If to promote discord and division is pleasing to Mr. Wight—'his calling and vocation'—it is not mine, and I trust you will acquit me of any design, in this correspondence thus published, of calling up old feelings of enmity, or creating new matter for altercation. I must also trust you will not blame me for being, in this way, the means of bringing you before the public, in a manner so entirely different from your known character. Of one thing you may be certain: your character is so well established, that this attack, or indeed any other from Mr. Wight, will do you no harm.

Towards the Trinitarian Society I have no unkind feelings. Many of its members I highly esteem, and none the less because they do not think as I do. I believe the friendly feelings between

the Societies, to which I have referred, was agreeable to them; nor can I believe that the course taken by Mr. Wight in this case meets their approbation.

Mr. Wight's rancor, against all who think as you do, is conspicuous throughout his book, but more particularly against you personally, on page 52, note B. Will you be so kind as to furnish me with a statement of the transactions there referred to, and such other remarks on the correspondence generally as you may think proper to make.

Complaint has been made by several, who have bought Mr. Wight's book, that the letters are so overshadowed and intermixed with notes and comments, that they cannot be understandingly read. As they are before the public, and in such a state, we shall probably publish them in a way they can be read, and as they are, with some new matter, and ask liberty to publish your reply to this.

With great respect,

JOHN B. TURNER.

First Letter from Rev. Edmund Q. Sewall to Hon. John B. Turner.

Scituate, March 9, 1845.

Hon. John B. Turner.

Dear Sir: — The statement of facts for which you ask in your letter dated Feb. 28, I herewith transmit. There was no call for this in my own breast to which alone I would have yielded. The hostility I had done nothing to provoke, but which came instead of a friendship I had done all I could to cherish, should have spent itself without notice from me, were not this personal matter so complicated with subjects of more general importance.

On the occasion first alluded to by your correspondent, as having afforded him ground for complaint, the Meeting of a Society of our young temperance friends after the death of two of their number, I well remember what prompted my remarks and with what purpose I made them. The previous speakers had ranged within a particular circle of topics, and seemed to have said what was sufficient and proper in respect to these. But my thoughts had meanwhile been wandering to the beautiful examples of filial piety and moral worth left us by the deceased. Intent on paying some tribute to their virtues, and with no design to utter anything more than would serve to commend these to imitation, which I was more free to do because neither of the deceased was of my particular society, I spake in my turn. A Good Life in its relations

to a happy death was at such a time no inappropriate theme. I dwelt on that theme, fondly, earnestly, with all my heart. I let it be known how I esteemed in every character the purity and goodness, which are manifested in a life of humble usefulness. There was no such idea in my mind as Mr. Wight now ascribes to me. I did not imagine it possible for such to have entered his, until his words met my eye. Never had he hinted it in our many subsequent conversations. Nor can I now find a single individual, who understood me as he seems to have done. I took no offence at the Orthodox forms of doctrine and of expression which had preceded my address. Nor at the Trinitarian prayer and doxology. Why then ought offence to have been taken with me for an effusion fresh from my heart, on topics, aside indeed from what the rest had touched, but not irrelevant, nor in themselves unimportant? Was I alone put under restraint where all else were free? I spake as I was moved to speak. To no one who had judged me in a spirit congenial with the purposes of that solemn memorial service, would the suspicion have occurred, that I designed to contradict what others had said before me. And now, I appeal to those who were assembled there, of all denominations, to say whether I had the air of one who sought a quarrel with a funeral wreath in his hand.

The Orthodox Sunday School celebration, alluded to in the same note to the 'Correspondence,' caused neither me nor my society any uneasiness, as is represented. The invitation which we had always extended was not indeed offered us in turn. But no objection occurred to the arrangement, except that part of it, which sent our children home from the day-school inquiring 'Mother! am I a Trinitarian? I can go to the celebration if I am.' Such was the indiscretion in the mode of announcing the plan. But it was never resented and soon forgotten.

An affair, which derives from its results more importance, is the Lecture appointed for me by District No. 5, to be held in their house. If I am asked *why* I desired at this time, to avail myself of an opportunity to address my religious friends and parishioners in that quarter of the town, I answer thus. In the course of two years previous I had had my attention drawn more than usually, to the peculiar disadvantages of the people of that neighborhood, in respect to attendance on public worship. I had personally applied to the agent of the district, for leave to use the school-house for a lecture once a fortnight, as much as *eighteen months before* it was opened to Rev. Mr. Wight. The long illness of a parishioner, in that part of the parish, had for a year obliged me very frequently to go there. I had, at his request, held a meeting in his own dwelling. And, not long afterwards, at two other houses in the same district. It was when I called upon the widow of my friend after his death, July, 1843, that I first heard of the intention to

have a stated Sunday meeting and a Sabbath school, in the district house, by the united Baptist and Calvinist societies. She mentioned it in connexion with what was said about the orphan child. I advised her by all means to send him to the proposed Sunday-school. This proves I had no hostile views in regard to the measures undertaken by my Orthodox brethren. Duty called me, on the same afternoon, to another friend's house near at hand. To him I made known my long cherished desire, to do something to awaken a religious interest among the people around him, who labored under so great inconveniences and privations in the matter of public worship. I requested him to go to every man in the district and inquire if he was willing, that I should take part in the good work begun by others, and in turn with them preach in the school. If no objection offered, I wished him to inform me, and have the meeting appointed whenever the district saw fit. Accordingly I soon received the invitation to come on a near Sunday.

If any one should say here, why did you not first seek the clergymen who were engaged to preach there, and not the district? I reply, that I was *on the spot at the time*, when I was first *informed* of the newly projected lecture. It was a long way from home, and I wanted to do what I had to do there in relation to the matter, seasonably, fearing I might be unable for some weeks to come there again of a week-day. But more than all, I did not imagine or suspect, that any one who sought the religious good of the people in that quarter, would object to my doing the same. I only designed a meeting for devotion and experimental religion, not to disseminate any peculiar doctrines. Repentance and spiritual life were to have been my topics, not points of disputation. If others had a right to preach there, with consent of the district, I had an equal right. Why should the mere circumstance, that the house was opened first for their use or by their influence, abridge my liberty to use it also, provided its owners were willing? The two clergymen implicated had each before this requested me, on funeral occasions, to share their services. I had done so. For them I felt only respect and love. Not a moment did I harbor such a thought as their refusing to allow me room, where *all* stood on *common ground*, to aid in what was designed to influence my own no less than their parishioners for their highest welfare. I could not believe that I should be excluded whence a minister from abroad, who had not one parishioner in the place, was not to be. Of the interview held with me in my study, subsequently, by Rev. Mr. Wight, it is unnecessary for me to speak. I cannot agree with him in his statements respecting it, which leave a wrong impression of my words and my meaning in using them. His purpose was to induce me to give up my arrangement with the district, in favor of the minister from Cohasset. But I had no option to do so then, without consulting those who had sent me the invitation.

I repaired to the place the next morning. I sought, not a parishioner of mine, but an orthodox friend, Capt. Henry Damon. He welcomed me kindly. No sooner had I named the subject, than he *cordially assented to the proposal of my coming to lecture* in his neighborhood. He was surprised that any objections had been offered by his minister, and thought some one must have misinformed him about the minds of the people in the district. It has been said that I was found trying to '*persuade*' Mr. Damon to consent to my arrangement. The fact was, he gave me no opportunity or occasion to do so. He was abundantly willing already. For this I appeal *to himself.* I cite his *words to others* to the same effect, uttered *since* the correspondence was published. It was persuasion on the other side, which afterwards produced a change of feeling in him, if he be changed. The signatures so 'kindly given' by those persons who had never exchanged a word with me on the subject to which they testify, and whose knowledge extended only to one side of the question, are not entitled to the weight of impartial evidence. Had they remembered the Golden Rule, their names had never been attached to a certificate, designed to impeach one of whose own views and intentions in the matter they were entirely ignorant.

You may inquire how, after all, I came to the conclusion to withdraw from my engagement to preach, as I had been invited to, in the district school-house. The sole cause was this. In his argument against the purposed union with me in pious labors, Rev. Mr. Wight had assured me that, if I *did* keep my appointment, as it then stood, they should hold a meeting in a neighboring house at the same hour. I represented to him the impropriety of this. I pointed out the injury to religion, of such competition. I adverted, for illustration, to the running of opposition stages. In every way I endeavored to impress him with the idea that this would never do, and added, if you persist in that plan, I shall withdraw. The final result then was, to leave the whole matter for further consideration by the people of the district, on the Sunday following. When I inquired of Rev. Mr. Wight on Monday what issue they had come to, he reminded me of my having said, that I should withdraw if they felt obliged to hold their meeting at the same hour in the immediate vicinity of the school-house; this they had now concluded upon; and with that view they had abandoned the school-house altogether. Thus I was held to my word, and had no alternative but to relinquish my design. The same reason has since kept me aloof from the place and the people; not because I have ceased to desire, in my humble way, to promote the great object I had in view, but for the sake of peace on *any* terms, with those who had complained so harshly with so little cause.

And now, my dear Sir, can a reflecting, considerate person, who had for a long period known my general habits in the conduct of

my ministry, have accused me of improper and 'unchristian interference' in all this? How many opportunities have I had to 'proselyte' among my Orthodox neighbors, if that had been a favorite pursuit with me. How easily could I have sent my tracts from door to door, as my accuser has sent his throughout my parish, for many a month past. The periods during which they had no settled pastor, and were in discouragement, might have yielded a plentiful harvest of converts to an unscrupulous man. Did I so use them? They know I did not. But with a vigilance that never slept, I sought to guard and promote their peace and welfare in the spheres where God had placed them. No one can say I ever obtruded my opinions upon him, or his, or that I made them of paramount importance. And I bear grateful testimony, with a melancholy pleasure now, to the thousand kindnesses which have been shown me by my fellow Christians of different denominations. Not least by those in the Calvinist communion. There are among the dead those whose memory I fondly cherish, and among the living others whom I will not cease to honor and esteem, though they may banish me from their hearts, under the sad mistake which blinds them to my real purposes. Would we could all forget the titles which divide us in the holier ones which draw us to each other!

To the calumnies which close your late correspondent's notes, I cannot bring myself, for my self-respect, to answer. I cannot, I will not believe, that his own heart approves the use of them, or that his own understanding is perverted by their power. Where is the fairness of making a whole denomination, including multitudes of believers throughout the world, answerable for what two writers may have uttered, or two preachers spoken, in a foreign or our native land? What have I to do with Priestley, or Belsham, or Parker, or Fourier? 'One is our Master, even Christ.' 'Who art thou who judgest another man's servant?' To charge upon one the errors of all, were rather strange measure to mete. Suppose I were to select from Calvin and Luther, not to mention meaner names, all the extravagant sentences with which their works abound, and lay them at the door of every Calvinist and Lutheran in Christendom? Would Mr. Wight consent to the measure he metes withal?

For myself I shall not, for all which can be said in so bitter and unchristian a spirit, cease to read my Bible with my own eyes, looking upward to the Fountain of Light for illumination. To the stream which descends from the radiant Sun of the Spiritual world, may no obstruction be offered by our hard prejudices, and our evil passions, then will Truth and Righteousness go forth to triumph gloriously.

With sentiments of respect and esteem,

I remain yours, &c.

E. Q. Sewall.

Second Letter from Edmund Q. Sewall to Hon. John B. Turner.

Scituate, March 31, 1845.

Hon. John B. Turner.

Dear Sir: — In my previous letter I could only touch upon a few particulars, which have a personal bearing, in the Notes appended by Rev. Daniel Wight to your Correspondence. My wish now is to review those points in the general subject which more nearly concern the Parish, to which I have been so long and happily united.

It has been represented that this controversy sprung from a desire to settle several matters, which lay open to discussion, and were in actual dispute. This is certainly wide from any knowledge I have had, for thirteen years, of the state of things in Scituate. Long ago was the only question at issue, between the persons who formed the Trinitarian Society and the First Parish in Scituate, determined by the separation of the former from the latter. The seceders knew what they were about to do. They had full opportunity and every needed facility to obtain legal counsel, and ascertain the cost of removal from their connection with the Church and Society, which, under plea of conscientious scruples, they had concluded to forsake. By that removal, they knew that their interest in the First Parish in Scituate must cease. They knew that, according to the constitution and laws of Massachusetts, they could take away only themselves, and were leaving behind the Funds which they now claim. They decided, however, to withdraw. They did so, freely, voluntarily, uncompelled. Nothing but their own act *could* have severed the ties, which had held them to this Church and Parish. That act they chose to perform. They were not driven out. They went out. Where then is the propriety or justice of calling up, after twenty years, the question which they settled then, as if it were now an undecided one? Why complain of what they themselves, of their own accord, brought about? Why blame so harshly those who had no hand in the matter, but stood aloof, and let them do as they had a will to do? They might have remained, to this day, members of the First Parish in Scituate, had they desired it. No obstacle was thrown in their way by their fellow-parishioners. They thought it impossible, however, with a good conscience, to stay any longer in that connection. If then, they did conscientiously separate themselves, ought this not to stop all murmuring at the *foreseen* and *inevitable* consequences? Ought it not to repress any disposition to reproach others for what others could not help, for that which never would have happened, but for their own will and

deed? What could they have wished for, to induce them to remain, *which the consciences of others did not forbid*, that was withheld from them?

The recent letters to you, Sir, and comments made upon them in the public Orthodox prints, assume and allege that a series of 'systematic measures,' on the part of the First Parish in Scituate, has been relentlessly pursued for many years, with a view to deprive of their rights those individuals who founded the Trinitarian Society. Now, it is clear, from every page of the Parish Records, from the whole history of the last twenty years' proceedings in the Parish and Church, from the most indisputable facts, that *no single measure* has been ever taken with reference to those persons, or their interests, by the First Parish in Scituate. There has absolutely nothing been done, from first to last, by this Society, or their authorized representatives, to prejudice these seceders. The separation originated wholly in the wishes and designs of those who separated themselves, not in those of the Parish, Church, or Pastor, whom they abandoned. It was not a case of persecution. No right had been violated, no privilege denied. The persons who withdrew had *failed* in an endeavor to *produce a radical change in the Church and Society*, had found it a vain attempt to exact of others what their consciences refused, and, unwilling to abide the result where they were, they exercised their plain constitutional right, and left the Parish.

Ten out of the eleven who thus separated themselves had been received to the communion of the Church by Rev. Nehemiah Thomas. Of these, *seven* came into that relation *less* than *two* years before the time of this removal. They came with a clear knowledge and understanding of the past and present condition of things in the Church, and of the religious views which had prevailed during the thirty years' ministry of Mr. Thomas, as in that also of his predecessor, Rev. Mr. Dawes. They are represented now, by Mr. Wight, as having been Orthodox as well before they joined the Church, as when they left it. But they knew this *was* not, and *had not been*, for a long course of time, a Calvinistic Church. There was no misapprehension in the case. They had intimate acquaintance with the minister and the brethren, and were in no doubt as to their religious standing and opinions. With all this knowledge, however, they sought, freely and unsolicited, an alliance with the Church. And what covenant did they assent to, upon their admission to communion? It is recorded in the Church book, vol. ii. p. 177. I subjoin it.* Read

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* 'You do now, in the presence of Almighty God, before angels and this Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, solemnly, and, as far as you know your own heart, sincerely recognize the Lord Jehovah to be your God and portion forever. You do also declare your acceptance of, and

it, and judge whether it be a Calvinistic confession or not. It is entitled 'Covenant propounded on admission of Members to this Church.' It is in the handwriting of Rev. Mr. Thomas. Now, what might reasonably be inferred from a deliberate and solemn act like this, but that the persons who performed it were conscientiously satisfied with the connection into which they were thus entering? They who consented to this covenant must have thought it right, and consistent with their religious convictions, to adopt and abide by it, as the bond of union and fellowship with the Church. Else, why signify this in an act so solemn? But, if their consciences allowed them to *join* a Church not Calvinistic by owning a covenant not Calvinistic, they need surely have had no scruples about *remaining* in that union, with no other recognition of doctrinal opinions and religious purposes by their pastor and brethren. What was enough to satisfy their consciences at first, was enough to the end, if they were still the same. Why, then, did they not stay peaceably, where they had voluntarily placed themselves? Why did they not abide steadfast in the covenant which they had entered into, instead of demanding another? If they came into the Church with no design to make divisions, why did they not hold fast to the only methods by which divisions could be prevented? Why did they first consent to the covenant which bound all in harmony together, and then complain of their Church state, as if it were quite wrong for want of a better covenant? Either the covenant in use was what their consciences required upon their joining the Church, or it was not. If the former, why make difficulty about it, and complain of their state under it? If the latter, who was to blame? Most assuredly, it was no wrong done them by others, which occasioned their dissatisfaction. Nothing was altered in the Church. They left it as they found it. Their rights as members of it were undisturbed. The pastor had adopted no new measures. The brethren were the same. Their continuance in the fellowship which they had sought might have been happy and edifying, for all that was done by any besides themselves. It was on *their* part the uneasiness

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submission to, Jesus Christ, as the great Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church; the Holy Spirit, as your enlightener, your sanctifier, and your comforter. Furthermore, you do now give up yourselves to this Church of Christ, and promise that, by the help of divine grace, you will attend on the word, sacraments, and prayer, so long as God shall continue you in Church relation with us, and give you an opportunity therefor. This you promise. We, then, the Church of Christ in this place, do now receive you into our sacred fellowship and communion, promising that we will treat you with that Christian tenderness which your relation to us as a Church member may require. May God Almighty prolong your days on earth; may you be made a blessing to this Church; and may we be finally admitted to partake of the rewards of the faithful in Christ's kingdom of glory. Amen.'

began. It was *they* who caused the division. On them must rest the responsibility and the consequences.

Put the case to any Church in the land, let it be supposed their own, and they cannot but accede to this conclusion as just. There was no opposition to the admission of the seven members, who so soon declared by their actions their purpose to revolutionize the Church, because it was not supposed possible that they would join themselves to a communion, with a secret hostility to it. Their applying to be received into the Church was deemed proof, that they had made up their minds to be content with its ministry and terms of admission and union. It could not have been foreseen that persons with Calvinistic views would connect themselves with a Church that was known to be of a different persuasion, and then commence the endeavor to set aside the very covenant which was the instrument in the use of which that connection was formed. This, however, proved to be the fact. And is there a body of Christians any where, of any denomination, which would not think such a procedure most unwarrantable and injurious? What if it were so, that these persons had no other choice but to join this Church or none? What if distance made it inconvenient to repair to places of worship where their peculiar religious opinions were inculcated? These considerations do not palliate the injustice committed by deliberately associating themselves with a Church, whose present order and harmony they did not intend to respect. These cannot excuse their treatment of the confiding pastor, who welcomed them to the fellowship which they so soon disturbed by an attempt to cut him off from it.

I shall here be reminded, by your former correspondent, that the dissatisfied portion of the Church members sought to gain their object by bringing into use again an ancient formula, instead of the covenant which had been employed by Mr. Thomas. That such a formula existed was then known to but few persons, if to any, beside the pastor. The fact that another had for so long a period been the acknowledged covenant of the Church, proves this to have become obsolete. The document in question bears date March 12, 1710–11. Its preamble is the following:—

'*We, whose names are underwritten*, having been for a considerable time united together in the bonds of Church communion and fellowship, and esteeming it our duty and interest so to continue; but *forasmuch as the covenant wherein we have stood united is in such terms as is not agreeable to sundry persons*, who are of sober conversation and religiously disposed; we do *therefore* agree to renew and express our Church covenant in the words or terms hereafter mentioned.'

There is evidence here that the purpose was a *special* one, the relief of tender consciences, which were uneasy under the previously used form of words. It was a transaction which only those

engaged in it—and whose names, including all the males' and females', with the pastor's, are attached to the instrument—are obliged by. It *could* be made binding on no others without their consent. No names are subjoined, during the whole period of *one hundred and fifteen years*, to those of the original signers. For all that appears on the record, this was considered, by those who entered into it, as a covenant *among themselves personally* and *exclusively*, with no reference in their view to *future* generations. They had seen fit to lay aside another formula for this, because some liked the terms better. What they had done they may well have expected their successors in the Church to do again, if they found like occasion. In a matter so purely voluntary, and resting wholly upon each individual's conscience, none can be held obliged to sanction what the living or the dead have done before him. There was no need to rescind by vote a deed which was of itself null and void, as respected the existing Church members. A century was time enough for such an instrument as this to pass away in, if it ever was supposed to have any authority beyond the consent of those whose names are attached to it. The plain fact, in the present instance, was, that the more ancient formula had, by common consent, gone entirely into disuse and oblivion, and the then existing Church had owned and used none other than the one copied above. That alone was, and long had been, the covenant of the First Church in Scituate, at the time when the division took place.

The attempt to compel their pastor and brethren to assume what was virtually and to them a *wholly new* condition of Church fellowship, can be justified on no reasonable grounds. They had been united as a Church under terms which they themselves had mutually established, and which these complainants also had adopted and consented to, or they had never been admitted to membership. Where was the propriety or reasonableness of requiring the renewal of a formula which had been long wholly obsolete, and to which they had objections from conscientious motives? That already in use all *could* consent to, for all *had* consented. But the same could not be said of the one which it was designed to restore. There were, in that, expressions implying a belief of certain doctrines, which were no longer the faith of a major part of the First Parish, nor of the Church generally. To render assent to this indispensable to communion in future would be to shut the door of the Church against the congregation; to repel instead of encouraging the approach of new communicants. It was *a violation of Christian liberty*, to attempt so unnecessary a change. It was most inexcusable in those who made the attempt in this instance, for the reason, if there were no other, that they had themselves just obtained entrance to the Church by assent to the covenant in which all the rest were agreed.

They had no right to disturb the order and peace of the Church by innovations which would, in effect, revolutionize it and the religious society with which it was connected. Let a band of Unitarians enter a Calvinistic Church in the same way, and proceed to attempt a similar change, and what would be thought and said of it?

Your correspondent has frequently cited the Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline. In that we read respecting Church Covenants as follows: * 'This voluntary agreement, consent, or covenant (for all these are taken here for the same), although the more express and plain it is, the more fully it puts us in mind of our mutual duty, and stirreth us up to it, and leaveth less room for the questioning the truth of the Church estate of a company of professors, and the truth of membership of particular persons; yet we conceive *the substance is kept*, where there is a *real agreement* and consent of faithful persons, *to meet* constantly together in *one congregation for the public worship of God* and their mutual edification; which real agreement and consent they do express, by their *constant practice* in coming together for the public worship of God, and by their religious subjection to the ordinances of God there; the rather if we consider how scripture covenants have been entered into not only expressly by word of mouth, but by sacrifice, by handwriting and seal, also sometimes *by silent consent*, without *any* writing or expression of words at all.' If now, this ancient work is to furnish precedents for our modern observance, how plainly unnecessary to the purposes of Church union must be deemed the adherence to one and the same precise written formula, when we have here the declaration, that a real covenant may exist and hold a Church together with edification and harmony, without *any* writing or expression of words at all. The simple agreement implied in actually and constantly meeting together for public worship, is in the Cambridge Platform decided to be the *substance* of a Church covenant between faithful persons. This too is Orthodox authority. Was it then so important and essential to introduce a particular written form of words, and make consent to that indispensable to communion with the First Church in Scituate, that that Church must be rent asunder to effect the end? Why could not the newly admitted Orthodox Christians have sought other means of glorifying God and serving the cause of truth, than this which they knew beforehand would occasion such irremediable evils? If they lamented the 'loose state of things' in the Church, so deeply in one respect, they might be expected to act consistently with this in all others; but, when it became necessary to their own objects, they could depart from all ordinary Church usages, and avail themselves of the vote

* Page 26.

of one who had not for thirty-eight years had any connection with the Church, and was virtually excommunicated. And what makes the case worse, is, that they had many times solicited their pastor to proceed against this person by a formal excommunication, and he only remained, even nominally, a member of the Church through the lenity which replied, 'he has already taken himself away.' It is difficult to combine so much laxity of procedure on their own part in this instance, with so much rigor in the application of rules of order and discipline to the condition of the Church at large.

It is said in Mr. Wight's account of the separation, that the ancient covenant, to which we have so often referred, was renewed by the Church at a meeting over which the Pastor presided. No record on our Church books shows this. But if it were so, that such a meeting was holden, it must have consisted of the seceding members alone, and if Mr. Thomas was officially present, he could have intended no sanction to their proceedings; for, as appears from Mr. Wight's own story, the Pastor refused to copy from the old into the modern record-book the document in question; and, surely, if he had done the greater act in consenting to its restoration to use, he would not afterwards have hesitated on the less important one of copying it out. But it may be worth while to bring your correspondent's argument to another proof. The Cambridge Platform being his authority in so many other matters, may as properly be in this as in any. I find in that the following words.* 'From the premises, namely; That the ordinary power of government belonging only to the elders, power of privilege remaineth with the brotherhood, it followeth, that in an organic Church and right administration, *all Church acts* proceed after the manner of a *mixt* administration, *so as no Church act can be consummated or perfected without the consent of both.*' Now it is clear, Mr. Wight's reasoning goes on the assumption, that this renewal of the old covenant was a legitimate Church act. The mention he is careful to make of Mr. Thomas's having notified the meeting in which it took place, and presiding over it, shows he regards these as an important part of the requisite circumstances. If the Pastor was there in his acknowledged official relations and power, then was *his* assent and signature essential to make the act a valid Church act. But did he assent to the re-establishment of the obsolete formula? Did he put his name to it? Not at all. He may have been in the chair on the occasion of this Church gathering. But if so, he virtually quashed the whole proceedings, by withholding his consent to them. The Trinitarian covenant was *not* then, 'regularly renewed and adopted *by the Church* more than two months previous to the secession,' [Corresp. p. 11.] It

* Chap. x. p. 41.

was adopted only by those who chose to do so. Not by the Church. Where too were the many female Church-members? Those who thought as their pastor did about the matters in dispute were probably not attracted to this meeting. But if we take example from the primitive use in respect to this ancient formula, we should look for all the names, both male and female, with the pastor's at the head, upon this renewed adoption and signature of it. Rev. Mr. Pitcher's name stands first there, his whole Church following it.

The position is taken by Mr. Wight, that in their diversified efforts for the ascendancy of Calvinism, his friends did nothing which can properly be called innovation, introduced nothing new. But, suppose there should be insinuated into some now Orthodox Church a gradually increasing leaven of Romanists, and that these persons should avail themselves of an opportunity to insist upon the return of the Church to the Catholic fold, whence every Protestant Community issued, and to which all may be traced back. Suppose the adoption of the creeds and liturgy of that ancient mother Church were urged, on the ground that they were formerly the authoritative standards in all Christendom, and that the fathers to whom we look with veneration once held firmly to them. Would this be innovating? Would it be revolutionary? The Protestant knows what to answer. But what would this be, but the renewal of allegiance to a once dear, but now neglected form of doctrine? Forcing back the mind to its ancient Church standing is here no worse, than on Protestant ground. To me the attempt made by members of the First Church in Scituate, to compel that body to reassume a formula more than a century old, in spite of the fact, that another had been long substituted in its place, and the doctrine inculcated in it was no part of the present belief of almost the whole of the community in which the Church was embraced, and was contrary to the conscientious views of a very large proportion, if not the clear majority of the Church itself, was a revolutionary, innovating struggle. It was an unnecessary and a wrong step, tending to foment discord and perpetuate divisions, and not to advance truth or maintain piety. It was an infringement of the liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment. It was overleaping the already received terms of fellowship and communion, which all could still unite in, and going back a hundred years in search of what *could not* be applied to any other use, than to break up the Church order and peace. It was obliging those, who, like these Calvinists themselves, had entered the Church by a particular confession, not only to adopt a *new one* — one they had never assented to nor could assent to — but also to enforce that on others who might seek admission to the same privileges. The circumstance that it was a covenant used by the persons who were, more than a century before, attached to

the First Church in Scituate, cannot change the character of the proceeding, by which it was endeavored to impose it on the consciences of those who could not receive it. No greater change was it in their power to propose, than that which they only failed to effect for want of ability.

In regard to any moral claim in the Trinitarian Society to the property of the First Parish in Scituate, I cannot perceive on what reasons it can be founded, or by what evidence made good. The main questions here are these two. First, For what end and use solely were those ancient bequests made? Secondly, Whose benefit did the Grantors design to subserve by these gifts? The answers to these inquiries settle at once in whom rests the title to these Funds.

This property was confined and restricted in the grant and by the will of the donors, and it has sacredly been limited in the application, to one use and end alone, namely, *the maintenance of the Christian Ministry*, and that in the First Parish of Scituate, for the sole behoof of the people included in that Parish.

The ministry has no function more essential than the 'preaching of the word.' The property which is granted for the use of the ministry is granted to support preaching. And in this instance, preaching where? In foreign lands? In Plymouth Colony at large? In the whole town of Scituate? No. In the First Parish in Scituate. And if so, in the meeting-house belonging to the First Parish, and to the congregation there assembling for worship. It was the good of the Parish to which the donors belonged, and which they had deeply at heart, that was intended in their grant. It was to perpetuate preaching where one of them had himself been a preacher, that they gave their possessions. It cannot be pretended, with any color of reason, that this property, which was given expressly for the ministry, could be applied to any uses which did not comprehend preaching among the chief. Nor, if preaching were the great end aimed at, can we imagine a stronger proof of anything, than the evidence which shows, that this was designed to be preaching to the people who congregate for worship in the meeting-house of the First Parish of Scituate, and these alone. What other audience did Mr. Hatherly or Dr. Chauncy propose for the minister they were providing to support, but the men, women, and children, who from generation to generation should continue to worship where they had worshipped, the descendants and representatives of those with whom they had gone to the house of God in company. None other persons than these were contemplated in their grants. For the preaching of the word, then, and for that in the First Parish of Scituate alone and forever, were the bequests made. If there had been similar possessions, given for the use in the same same place, when the first minister and the largest part of his Church removed to Barnstable, could they

have taken that property away with them? Because they were a majority of the Church, had they a right to remove under their disposal, what was bestowed here and meant to be used here? Certainly not. But why not, if we reason as Mr. Wight reasons, and irrespective of the end and use for which alone they were given, namely, preaching, allow the property to follow about a majority of Church members, however few in number, leaving the great congregation for whose behoof that preaching was proposed, bereaved and destitute of a ministry. I maintain that *the use* for which the grantor gave his property, does, in this instance, determine it to be the property, not of a few communicants alone, but of the whole body of worshippers who are legally members of the Parish. If the communicants could hold it exclusively, they could use and control it exclusively. But how could they use it according to the donors' will, if they separated from the congregation for whose advantage it was expressly designed?

When I commenced my ministry here, I took from the Assessor's list a total of two hundred and ten families. There were probably more in my predecessor's day. Now, will any reasonable man admit, that more than two hundred families should yield up all share in the funds left for the support of the ministry among them, at the claim of twenty odd men? Yet this is the 'moral claim,' which your correspondent virtually asserts. He might as well assume a right in the individual communicants, to divide the property for their own personal and private use, or to build a steam-boat or a rail-road.

At the early period to which these bequests carry us back, when no inhabitant of a town could have the political rights of a freeman, unless he were a member of some Church, we might well suppose, what history shows to have been the case, that the terms Church, and Parish, would be applied with very little discrimination. In fact, the Church comprised the Parish. The interests of the whole were had in view when either name was employed. What was given to the Church for religious purposes — especially when the support of the ministry is specified among those purposes — was in intention, as in effect, given to the entire religious society who worshipped together. No *exclusive* interest in such property, any more than a *private* and *personal* interest, could, by the mere circumstance that only the Church was mentioned in the words of the grant, be considered to be vested in the communicants. But in the present instance, the Church in the First Parish being the only one concerned, they who are no longer members of that Parish, can have no reasonable claim to what was intended only for support of its ministry. This property was not a gift outright without condition, but a bequest with conditions annexed. Those conditions confine it here to those who alone can fulfill them.

It is argued that the Trinitarians have a just claim to our funds, because their religious opinions alone coincide with those held by Mr. Hatherly and Dr. Chauncy, the chief donors. But what right have we, or they, to infer a limitation in the grant of property for the use of *the* ministry, which shall determine it to go to a *particular kind* of ministry? The grantors have transmitted no such terms with their grant. They did not say what must be the character of the ministry which they helped to maintain. We cannot say it for them. By necessity, unless a special condition is expressly inserted by the grantor, it can never afterwards be attached to his deed of bequest, by mere conjecture and implication. If we undertake to say that these donors, in giving money for the Christian ministry, intended a Calvinistic ministry, because they were Calvinists, we may go on, and say it must be for a Baptist ministry, because they both held to baptism by immersion, and indeed we must take every peculiarity known or discoverable in their views of religion into our account. In that case, no Orthodox preacher of our day would be likely to come up to the assigned description. For Orthodoxy now is no longer what it was in 1640. But furthermore, are we to forget that a *duty*, solemn and imperative, lies upon the people, who constitute at any period a particular Parish, in respect to the settlement of a minister? Are they not under obligations to choose one whom, in the fear of God and with a pure conscience, they believe to be sound and well qualified? If this be their duty, they *cannot*, *ought* not to look back two centuries, to see what was then thought a good ministry, nor forward through a like distance of time with conjectures what may be then considered such; they must not ask other communities for their opinion, and be governed by it alone, nor take their former Church standards for a guide; but they are bound to select one to preach the word of God whom their *own minds* have designated. How can this duty be performed, if the position be maintained, that we must expend our funds upon a Calvinistic ministry, because we believe the donors esteemed Calvinistic divinity the truth? Had they themselves prescribed the condition, their bequests would no longer be ours, than the condition was complied with. But there is no evidence that they did. In default of their limitations we have not authority to set up our own. Who can pretend to judge, whether, if those benefactors were now amongst us, they would, with all the light of our day shining upon them, give the preference to the opinions most resembling what prevailed in their own time? The First Parish in Scituate has to *discharge a duty, fulfil a sacred trust*, as well as exercise a clear and undoubted *legal right*, in appointing their own ministers according to their own views of what the word of God requires a minister of Christ to be and to teach.

I fear I have exhausted your patience, dear Sir, in this commu-

nication, although I am far from having exhausted my subject. There is little need to add more, however, to what you have so ably and so generously done in behalf of the assailed reputation of the venerated dead, and of the society which has the pleasure to number you among its members. Most earnestly do I hope, this will terminate both your and my share in the unwelcome task of refuting objections, and repelling unjust imputations from those, with whom we both would gladly associate on the most amicable and Christian terms.

With great respect and esteem,

Yours, &c.

E. Q. Sewall.

REVIEW

OF A PAMPHLET ENTITLED

'A SECOND SERIES OF LETTERS

CONCERNING THE

History of the First Parish in Scituate,'

MASSACHUSETTS.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY S. N. DICKINSON & CO.
1845.

REVIEW.

It argues no want of respect, for an individual to examine with candor, the opinions and writings of others. This is evidently true, however superior to himself, in age or other respects, those may be whose opinions and writings he may examine. 'Great men' *may* have 'great errors,' as well as great excellences, and we ought not to yield a blind and servile assent to every thing a great or even good man may say or do, as though it were impossible for him to err. Inspiration teaches another method. '*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*' It is under the direction of this precept that the writer would attempt a brief review of a pamphlet, recently put into his hands. It is entitled, 'A Second Series of Letters concerning the History of the First Parish in Scituate.'

I am happy to discover more fully, in this very *title page*, the great secret of the difficulty in the discussion to which it relates. 'A Second Series of Letters,' &c. On opening the pamphlet, I find that this 'Second Series' does not *commence* till past the middle of the book, where it is further defined, (p. 49,) as 'a Review* of the aforegoing correspondence.' On examination, I find that the book does indeed also contain an 'aforegoing correspondence,' although curtailed, by the omission of the last reply, some ten or twelve pages. In this *first* 'series,' I had the misfortune to bear some humble share; but surely, I never thought I was writing 'the history,' or 'concerning the history of the *First Parish* in Scituate,' except indeed by occasional allusions, while writing concerning the *First Church*, once connected with said Parish. Here has been the *grand difficulty*. We have been looking at different objects; not exactly at dif-

* More than a *third* part of this Review is written by one of the original correspondents; a *review of his own letters!* rather a strange anomaly.

ferent sides of the same shield, (of gold and silver,) but at two different shields. My opponents (for I must now use the plural,) have been attempting, as before intimated, (see *Correspondence*, p. 49,) 'to draw inferences with horse power, and weigh gold and silver in scales of logic;' or, in other words. they have attempted to regulate 'the order and discipline' of a *Church* by *civil* authority, and that too, by principles not laid down even in the civil law, as will be shown hereafter.

In nature we discover the existence of *matter*, and by investigation we find it is governed by certain general laws or principles peculiar to itself. We also discover the existence of *mind*, and certain laws, equally peculiar, by which this is governed. And the laws of mind are as distinct from those of matter, as the essences to which they relate, notwithstanding they often exist in close connection. Hence we do not ascribe memory to a stone, nor weigh thoughts by the pound; nor do we say of mind, that it is red or green, round or square. All such language would be absurd. Distinct elements in nature must have distinct laws and principles, by which they are known and governed. So in regard to *Church* and *State*, or in other words, (and without a quibble) *civil* and *ecclesiastical* laws. In this country, at least, they are distinct and 'severed,' — a principle which upsets and overthrows three-fourths, if not nine-tenths of all the arguments in this 'Second Series.' When a *civil* question is to be settled, we must refer, evidently, to *civil law;* when a moral question, to moral law; a chemical question, to chemical law; and when a church or *ecclesiastical* question, to *ecclesiastical* law. To reject this method, and attempt to settle a chemical question by *ecclesiastical* law, or the like, would be absurd, and betray an ignorance of the *first principles* of argumentation and common sense. Let those, therefore, who would not overthrow all order, and leave society in the utmost confusion, abide by this standard, and especially when the decision of the question, by its own appropriate laws, *does not conflict* with any other. Adopting this rational and sound principle of investigation, I proceed to one further attempt to settle the question or questions at issue, and would earnestly solicit the candid and impartial attention of the reader to what follows.

That these distinctions between civil and ecclesiastical law, above alluded to, are acknowledged in the Constitution and Laws of Massachusetts, is evident from the following extracts. I give one relative to the *rights of Parishes*, and another, (formerly quoted,) relative to the *rights of Churches*.

'*All parishes* or religious societies, whether corporate or unincorporate, shall continue to *have and enjoy their existing rights, privileges, and immunities, except* so far as the same may *be limited* or modified by the provisions of this Chapter, and the eleventh Article of the amendments of the Constitution.' (Rev. Stat. Chap. 20: Sect. 2.

'The respective *Churches*, connected and associated in public worship with such parishes and religious societies, shall continue to *have, exercise, and enjoy all their accustomed privileges and liberties, respecting divine worship*, CHURCH ORDER AND DISCIPLINE, and *shall be encouraged* in the peaceable and *regular* enjoyment and *practice* thereof.' (Id. Chap. 20 : Sect. 3.)

How clear and definite is the line here drawn between *the Church* and *the Parish!* The rights of the parish are 'limited' by the rights of the church, rather than the reverse, and the former are bound *not to interfere* with the latter, by express Statute, under the Constitution. I could not ask for more. The *State* leaves the *Church* to be regulated by its own laws, without an exception in regard to every particular for which I contend.

Now I ask, is it not evident from these Statutes, (and may I not say from 'all their accustomed' and 'regular' usage also?) that a person may join *one* of these bodies, (either the Church or the Parish,) and not the *other*? Or if already connected with both, may he not leave the one, and not the other? All this seems as plain as that two and two make four. And yet my opponents, Deacon, Minister, and all, lay this most obvious principle wholly aside! They slide over the whole like a bubble, and that too, notwithstanding I have pressed the point, again and again. I might have expected this, while contending with one never connected with any church, but surely I could have expected *sounder* principles from a Deacon and a Minister! They do well, however, to avoid the argument here, and take all upon mere assumption. They might as well attempt to prove that two and two make *five*. The withdrawal therefore of 'the nine' and 'the two' from the *society*, several days previous to the vote of dismissal, does not in the least *invalidate* their power and privilege to act *in the church*.

This principle is observed, even among my opponents themselves, in ordinary circumstances. In a late contest, if I am correctly informed, they were willing that a certain person should be received into *the church*, though not into the society. This fully grants *the principle* we maintain. His formal petition, however, was rejected in Parish meeting, but with what justice does not easily appear. He is a native of 'the North Parish in Scituate,' has always resided in it, and only wished an equal privilege in the benefit of those funds which our opponents say were designed 'for the use of the Ministry in said Parish.' 'Every person belonging to this Parish has an *undoubted right* to the benefit of that ministry.' (*Second Series*, p. 54.) My former correspondent has also admitted, that 'a church is an association for religious purposes only, and for such purposes *wants no civil powers*, and any *exercise* of such powers is an assumption of power *not warranted by law*;' and yet he assumes this very power, in deciding church membership and other church acts, when the *law* has expressly

given to *the church* liberty 'to have, exercise and enjoy all their accustomed privileges, respecting church order and discipline,' without exception. Truly may I repeat, 'error is always clashing.'

Having then established this important point, by common sense, and by their own usage, as well as by the Statute, I proceed once more to apply the majority principle. Says Bancroft, as before quoted, relative to Puritanism, 'The church existed *independent* of its pastor, who owed his office to its free choice; *the will of the majority was its law.*' And so says the Cambridge Platform. (See Chap. 10, Sect. 2, and Chap. 5, Sect. 2.) Esq. Turner also admits the same, (p. 64.) The *eleven* (nine and two,) are admitted to be Trinitarians, and opposed to those who remained. With the principle above established, they were still connected with *the Church*, and had an undoubted right to vote on Church questions. 'The two' who attended public worship in Hanover or Marshfield, for a time, after the secession, were *never dismissed* from this Church, till in one case death dissolved the bond. The other is still with us, *as a Church member*, as he *ever has been* since his first admission. So the records testify. But had they been dismissed the day after certain Church votes were passed, how could that circumstance invalidate their *previous* 'lawful' action? The eleven were therefore *regular voters* in the Church, at the renewal of their covenant, and the dismission of their pastor.

Mr. Stephen Mott was also a regular member of the Church, both according to civil and ecclesiastical law. Deacon Bailey says, 'he did not formally withdraw [from the Society] until nearly two years afterwards,' (p. 50,) and he was never *dismissed*, as a member of the Church, till his death, in 1837. (See Remarks on his Character, *Church Manual*, p. 12, and *Correspondence*, pp. 45, 46.) Yet he says, 'we are not disposed to count' this man! Truly liberal! to cast off or put on at pleasure, who could not thus make out a majority to suit himself!

It is believed, and established, on as good authority as we have in our power, that Rev. Mr. Thomas was himself *never a member of this Church.* I have carefully consulted the Church records in Marshfield, his native place, and find the record of his *baptism*, (April 13, 1776,) and that of his *admission* to the Church, (October 30, 1791,) but there in no record, as in other cases, of his *dismission.* He could not be a regular Church member in two places at the same time. Ordination does not constitute or destroy the relation of *Church membership.* We have, therefore, strong *negative proof*, that Mr. Thomas was never a member of the Church over which he was ordained pastor — a thing *still very common*, (and far too common,) in New England. We have no access to the positive proof; but if it exist, our opponents can produce it. Until then, we must conclude that Mr. Thomas

lived and died a member of the Church in *South Marshfield.* Hence, indeed, there were, as Deacon Bailey says, but 'twenty-three male members, in April, 1825,' — *twelve* of whom we have indisputably shown, by 'lawful' authority, were in favor of Mr. Thomas's dismission.

But further; we may also claim Deacon Howard White, as voting, or approving of the votes in the Church, on that occasion. Deacon W. is now a member and officer in the Baptist Church in this place, in regular standing, and has given *his certificate*, at simple request, without one word of 'persuasion,' that such were his views and action at the time. (See *Correspondence*, p. 44.) Referring to this man evidently, my former correspondent had *written* to him, 'you are welcome.' In my note to this expression, (which is kindly left out, with others as important as this, to a full understanding of both sides,) I replied, 'We hope then, that he will be no longer *counted* with the minority;' yet he is again brushed up, and without apology counted as before! Deacon White might well say to the Esquire, 'those who live in glass houses should never throw stones.'

We may also claim, as virtually on our side, Mr. Simeon Vinal. (See his *certificate*, *Correspondence*, p. 44.) This certificate, like the former, was obtained without one word of 'persuasion or importunity,' as I can prove by competent evidence. He also freely acknowledged the same, since its publication, in the presence of several witnesses, before his son and a certain Deacon had the privilege of all the 'persuasion and importunity,' that has lately been employed in the case.

And here I will say a word in regard to the manner in which all the signatures, (so uncivilly and indiscriminately assailed,) were obtained, as published in our late pamphlet. I can most unreservedly say, that there was not the least entreaty or importunity used to lead those intelligent, candid, and, in nearly every case, professedly pious men, to sign those documents. *Three* are Clergymen, and *two* Deacons, principally of a denomination different from my own. I appeal to them individually, and to *all* who signed those documents, whether I labored or importuned, or caused any other person to importune, for these signatures. They were indeed 'kindly given,' upon simple request, after careful attention to the documents. But has there not been 'persuasion and importunity,' if nothing more offered,*

* The *Baptists* themselves do not acknowledge Hatherly and Chauncy to be 'of *their* denomination,' although my opponents have tried hard to place them there; but from what motive is evident. To make a Baptist, in the common acceptation of the term, requires something *more* than to 'hold to baptism by immersion,' (p. 83,) as my own denomination hold to the same, although we also hold to baptism by sprinkling, pouring, &c. Attempts to disprove *the general identity of belief* in my own denomination, as it existed in the early settlement of this country, and at present, would not favor this Unitarian perversion of funds in the least. (See *note*, in *Correspondence*, p. 28.)

to induce these men to take back their names, or at least retract some word or sentence? The Deacons travelled, through mud and water, for some week or ten days, more or less, spending repeatedly near half a day at a place, to gain over some of these men to make some retraction. But not a word has been obtained, (aside from Mr. Vinal's. See note, foot of this page.) 'Names,' it would seem, are after all, not quite so easily obtained, under all circumstances, as 'the anecdote' mentioned would imply. (See '*Second Series*,' p. 58.) On one of the clergymen they called the second or third time, with the hope of a few lines, at least, but they could not be furnished. And I will here thank those men most affectionately, for their kindness to me and their fidelity to truth; but I doubt not they have the richer reward of an approving conscience. And I will also here say, that they have not *obtruded* their influence in this matter, but where their testimony to known facts was solicited and needed, they have cheerfully, but with modesty and christian propriety, given it.

But to return to Mr. Vinal's case. He had freely acknowledged to me, with another Church member, *the whole substance of the certificate* he signed last October, more than two years previous to that date. Soon after my arrival in Scituate, (June, 1842,) I called at the alms-house, with the brother above alluded to. Mr. Vinal was then apparently upon his death bed, from a severe fall. I spoke with him of his christian experience and hopes, which led him to refer to his connection with the Church, his views of doctrine, and the reasons for his not withdrawing, in 1825, with the rest. I was pleased with the christian spirit he manifested, sympathized and prayed with him in his distress, both at that time, and again a few weeks after. This free and full acknowledgment, under these circumstances, years before the Correspondence was thought of, led me to seek his signature, simply to what he had so unhesitatingly acknowledged so long before. He gave it in the presence of the same brother, without a word of objection or hesitation. He had also read our Church Manual repeatedly, and said he could freely give his consent to its correctness, to *the Articles of Faith and Covenant*, as well as history. I say then that Mr. Vinal was *virtually* with the majority, as we understand it. He never voted against them on the questions in dispute. He was doubtless persuaded to stay away from some of the later Church meetings, in 1825, as he has recently been, to request that he might 'see my face' no more 'on such business.'*

We have then, the Church, consisting ecclesiastically and

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* Since writing the above, I have been personally informed by Mr. Vinal, before witness, that *he never sent any such request to me.* His wife also corroborates the same, and says *Nahum* wanted to have his father send such word, but he did not consent! He appeared as glad to see me as ever.

truly of twenty-three male members, in 1825. Of these there can be no question, as to *the twelve*, whose names stand together in the Church Manual, (p. 11,) *five* if not *six* of whom had long been members of this Church. To *Mr. White*, we are told, 'we are welcome.' Mr. Vinal was virtually on this side, and also *Mr. John Studley*, who left soon after the others. The *vote* of dismission was *unanimous*. See an important note on this point, (*Correspondence*, pp. 44 and 45,) wholly unnoticed in the 'Second Series.' Hence *fourteen*, if not *fifteen*, of the twenty-three, were Trinitarians, in favor with their old Covenant, and *thirteen* to *ten*, took an active or *approving* part in Mr. Thomas's dismission. *Twelve* of the twenty-three *immediately* seceded, and *two* others soon followed. On the majority principle, then, Mr. Thomas was fairly dismissed. But on how much *clearer* proof, have we the majority in favor of the *Trinitarian Covenant*, of which Mr. Deane says, 'not having a majority,' &c.

The expression, 'an equal number,' on the errata to our 'Church Manual,' has often been construed, very unjustly, to mean an acknowledgment that we had *not* a majority in favor of Mr. Thomas's dismission — only 'an equal number.' But those who take the pains to refer to the sentence where this expression should be substituted, will see that *one* of the twelve is not there included. '*Without* this member,' I say, 'there was an equal number in favor' — *with* him a clear majority —*the vote was unanimous*, *Cor.* p. 45. The *conduct* of the minority confirms this view, for if the majority had been Unitarians, in favor of Mr. Thomas, and opposed to the old Covenant, why did Mr. Thomas repeatedly refuse to notify Church meetings, even when requested by the signatures of a majority of his Church? Why did he refuse, and persevere in refusing, to regard the efforts made by his Church to settle existing difficulties, and especially the request of the Church, 'signed by a majority,' to call a mutual council for advice, in which he was to choose one half of the Churches to be sent to? And why did he refuse to attend the later Church meetings, with certain of his followers, if *they* were the majority? How easy it would have been for them to have settled all things *in order*, and to their liking, had they been the real majority? But that the true majority was, as I have stated, is most obvious and incontrovertible.

But 'why then,' says Deacon Bailey, (p 50,) 'did they withdraw?' Because *the Parish* were unwilling to dissolve the *civil*, as the Church had the *ecclesiastical*, bond. This, therefore, was their only 'lawful' and proper alternative. But, says Deacon Bailey, (p. 52,) 'The Church and Society, *in their associated capacity*, settled him and made him *their pastor*. The power alone which makes can unmake.' But *what* power truly *makes a pastor*, as referring to religious teachers? The term *pastor* is evidently *correlative* with *flock*,—the sheep and lambs,—or be-

lievers and their baptised children — *the Church;* and *not* with the *Society* or *Parish.* The same man is *Pastor of the Church and Minister of the Parish.* This is the usual and proper distinction. We never say *pastor of the Congregation*, or of the *Society*, but pastor of the *Church.* Hence *the Church* first and *separately* call a man to become their *Pastor.* The society concur in calling the same man as their *Minister*, or public religious teacher. *Thus was Mr. Thomas called,* and thus still is *every Pastor* called. The Constitution says nothing about this *Pastoral* relation, but leaves this whole subject with *the Church*, and speaks only of 'public teachers' or 'ministers.' Says the Cambridge Platform, (which was *twice approved* by General Court,) relative to this subject, 'Officers [*Pastors and Deacons*] are to be called by such *Churches*, whereunto they are to minister.' Of such moment *is the preservation of this power*, that the Churches exercised it in the presence of the Apostles. Acts 1 : 23, 6 : 3 — 5, 14 : 23.' 'The essence and substance of the outward calling of an ordinary *officer in the Church* does not consist in his *ordination*, but in his voluntary and free election *by the Church*, and his accepting of that election; whereupon is founded that relation between *pastor* and *flock* — between such a *minister* and such a *people.*' 'And if *the Church have power* to choose their officers, then in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, *they have power* also to depose them; for to open and shut, to choose and refuse, to constitute in office and remove from office, are acts belonging to the *same body.*' Says Dr. Emmons also, 'The right of dismission belongs *solely to the Church.*' (See also note A, *Correspondence*, p. 51.) Hence it appears conclusive, that Rev. Mr. Thomas was regularly dismissed *as Pastor.* 'The power alone which makes can unmake.' *The Church make their Pastor*, and the *Parish* their *Minister.*

These facts being thus established, it follows: First, that the charge of false statements, made in Mr. Deane's history, was well founded; Secondly, that Rev. Mr. Thomas was properly dismissed as Pastor of the Church — the *ecclesiastical bond*, though not the *civil contract*, was sundered; Thirdly, that those who withdrew in 1825, were the true *First* Church in Scituate. And Fourthly, that all the exclusive Church property, of the First Church in Scituate, belonged to the same body.

This may be shown, even if we follow the civil law, and the decision of the judges. The Statutes have already been quoted. The *decision* is as follows. 'When the majority of the Church separate from the majority of the Parish, the minority who remain with the Parish, constitute *the Church in that Parish*, and retain the rights and property thereof.' Note this; the decision does *not* say, that the minority who remain constitute the *First Church*, but only 'the Church *in that Parish.*' Thus when the *old Church*, (or all except a few old women perhaps,) have de-

parted from a *Parish*, according to their privilege, granted in the Statute, the Judge takes upon himself *the ecclesiastical power* to set up, in the eye of *the civil law*, (and that only,) the minority who remain as a *new Church*, 'the [future civil] Church in that Parish!' The *one* old lady in Framingham, and the *three* in Reading, (See *Correspondence*, pp. 37, 38, unnoticed,) with others in similar circumstances elsewhere, are all thus *churched* by the edict of a Judge!

But one of my opponents paraphrases a little upon this decision. It is not quite as plain as he could wish. Hence he says, 'Those who remained, retained *all the rights* possessed by the *whole* before separation'— and, 'amongst other rights, the *right* to the name — *First Church*.' But how so? This is far from following the import of the Judge's language. If *the old Church* have removed, under the protection of the Constitution and Statute, and the Judge has set up *another* Church in the old Parish, it must be, of course, a *new* Church. That this *new* Church of the Parish, may retain all *their* rights and property, is not called in question. They may create as large a fund as they choose from their own resources, and appropriate its avails as they please; and they may take any *name* they choose, as the *Second* Church in the First Parish, or the *Unitarian* Church in the First Parish, or any other, provided they do not assume their neighbor's. But if, indeed, it was the intention of the Judge to give all the property of the old Church to this new one, of his own creation, (the propriety or justice of which we cannot see,) can we believe he was so absurd, as well as unjust, as to intend to take away the *old Church's good name also*? I cannot think a Judge upon the bench, in good old Puritanic Massachusetts, would *intend* an act so absurd. Yet such is the interpretation of this writer. But as well might we interpret the decision of a Judge, who should in court 'give to a son the rights and property of a deceased father,' to mean that the Judge intended to transfer the *father's age and character*, as well as property — so that the son would be at once as *old* and *virtuous*, as the father at his decease; or we might as well say, a son can beget his own father! Error is, indeed, ever 'clashing,' if not with itself, with *nature!* Let my correspondent then, bear all the *absurdity* of his interpretation, with its *honor*.

One forced interpretation further in this connection. The same writer says, '*They* certify that they withdrew from the *Parish*, and *the law* at that time says, the consequence of their withdrawing destroys their connection with *that Church*.' (p. 60.) *

* Judge Parsons says, that 'To be an inhabitant of the *Parish* is not a necessary qualification of a Church member.' If the decision of one Judge may be *reversed* by another, there is still room for further *reversals*, where there is sufficient reason.

This he interprets to mean the *First* Church, which we have just seen *cannot be;* for perhaps the *First* Church has left *in mass*, as is sometimes the case. Remember the *Judge* does not say — the *First* Church; * this is a gloss of some *wiser* man, a gloss which assumes that if the *whole* Church were to remove, the *First* Church would still remain! † (See note, *Correspondence*, pp. 25, 26.)

One comment further — a comment upon the Constitution. Because the Constitution gives to 'the several towns, parishes, and other bodies-politic, or religious societies — the exclusive right of *electing* their public teachers, and of *contracting* with them,' &c., he inquires, what power is here given to Churches?' ‡ and replies promptly, 'none.' (p. 61.) Hence the Constitution, as *thus interpreted*, cuts off entirely the whole Statute, (Chap. 20, Sect. 3,) as before quoted, enacted under that very Constitution! But *ecclesiastical* power is evidently not alluded to, in this quotation from the Constitution. It refers chiefly, if not solely, to civil contracts, — a power in the Parish I have never called in question. It is the *ecclesiastical* bond, between *Church* and *Pastor*, and not the *civil* one, the 'fundamental law,' of 1780, between the Parish and their 'public teacher,' about which I have solely contended. *Here* the civil power of 'Old Massachusetts,' stands *pledged* not to interfere, but rather to 'encourage.' Why am I not understood? (Jo. 8: 43. 1 Cor. 2: 14.) But if a Judge step aside from his sphere, to decide an *ecclesiastical* question, about 'Church order and discipline,' and decide contrary to *ecclesiastical* usage, we have only to say, that decision is *unconstitutional*, and therefore *null and void.*

The questions relative to the bond between a *Pastor* and his *Church*, or of any particular member and this or that Church, or which is the *first* Church in any particular case, are evidently *ecclesiastical* rather than *civil* questions, and should be referred to the *proper tribunal* for a decision. The Constitution and Statutes of Massachusetts, leave all these questions in the hands of *the*

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* Hence the *first sentence* in the preface to this 'Second Series,' as well as the *title page*, is deceptive — a circumstance which naturally reminds one of the anecdote of the Spartan King, who said of a certain old man that was so ashamed of his gray locks that he dyed his hair to change its color — 'How can this fellow speak the *truth*, who not only carries about a falsehood in his heart, but one upon his head?'

† Some few years since, if I am correctly informed, the *whole Church* in South Weymouth withdrew from the *old* Society, and worshipped in a Hall near by, with a *new* Society, for about two years, when difficulties were so far settled, that the Church returned. I would inquire, was there *any Church with the old Society* during that interim?

‡ At the time the Constitution was adopted, 'the words "religious societies," were understood to include *Churches*, and to secure to *the Churches the right of electing their Pastors*, as really as to *Parishes* that of electing their *Ministers*.' See Sp. of the Pilg. Vol. II, p. 370, seq., and Vol. III. p. 539, seq.

Churches. But if the Judges have so far assumed ecclesiastical power, as to take these questions into their own hands, and have decided them according to *this* interpreter, I have only to say, wo be to the Churches, thus stripped of all ecclesiastical authority; for they would thus become truly, 'like a fire without heat, or an ocean without water,' or an assembly without people! But their decision is not such; or if so, such decisions are *null and void.*

Hence, the preceding view clearly confirms the *four* grand positions I have advocated. The first three are immutably established upon the plainest principles of common sense and common usage, as well as upon those of civil and ecclesiastical law. The fourth likewise follows from the same principles, and from the acknowledgment of my opponent himself. He says, (p. 65,) that the '*First* Church have a *legal* and *moral* claim to the ancient Church Records, and all other exclusive Church property.'

It only remains that I review some of the more specious arguments, and also a few of the misrepresentations and errors in this 'Second Series;' though after what has been said this would seem almost superfluous. The above view and principles properly decide the great questions at issue — the whole matter in dispute. But to proceed. The most important objection, I freely admit, is presented by Rev. Mr. Sewall, (p. 79,) where he brings my 'argument to another proof,' and calls in question the *legitimacy* of the Church act, passed February 6, 1825, renewing their ancient Covenant. He argues from the Platform, (Chap. 10, Sec. 11,) that the 'sanction' of the Pastor was essential to its force. But I reply (1) that perhaps the question, whether Mr. Thomas was himself *a member of the Church* or not, would somewhat modify this prerogative. If *not* a member, would it not *invalidate his right* to interfere with a vote, which referred solely to *their own mutual bond as a Church?* But waving this view, let it be remembered (2) that for his obstinacy in refusing to grant this and other most reasonable requests, several of which were made in writing, and signed by a majority of the male members, he was finally dismissed by a unanimous vote, as *Pastor* of the Church. That vote was thus confirmed and sanctioned by the *majority* of the Church.* But once more, (3) even allowing that Mr.

* Since writing the above, I have been informed by one of the male members of the Church in 1825, present at the Church meeting, when Mr. Thomas proposed the subject of renewing the old Covenant, that Mr. Thomas said, *he had no objection to it himself,* and as it was cold in the meeting house, he wished to have it adopted by the Church if they wanted it, and go home. To this Major Merritt replied, that there were *two or three words* in it, which he did not like, but if the other brethren wished to adopt it, he would make no difficulty. *No one else objected,* and the question was then settled without further dispute. Another male member of

Thomas had *power* virtually to 'quash' that whole *act*, it does not 'quash' *the old Covenant*, for that was still in force, even should we admit it was not *renewed* at that date. The assertion of Rev. Mr. Sewall, Deacon Bailey, Esq. Turner, and ten thousand more, who were *not then* connected with this Church, cannot invalidate the written declaration of the *Church Records* themselves, of the decisions of the ecclesiastical Council, assembled in 1825, who 'maturely considered the subject' *on the spot*, and the testimony of several then acting members of the Church, who are still living. These competent witnesses all agree in recognizing the Covenant of 1710–11 as their still existing Covenant — 'the Covenant on which this Church had [then, in 1825] stood for more than a century.' The Church Records do not contradict, but rather *confirm* this fact, even as quoted by Rev. Mr. Sewall, (p. 76,) and we *thank* him most heartily for this *small fragment* of the old Records — a fragment, however, small as it is, sufficient to condemn his own perverted interpretation of it, and *corroborate* our own Records, on the point above referred to. I refer to the 'preamble,' of this ancient *Covenant*, not a mere 'formula,' as he would have it understood. It is as follows: viz.

'We whose names are underwritten, having been for a considerable time united together in the bonds of Church communion and fellowship, and esteeming it our duty and interest *so to continue;* but *forasmuch as the Covenant wherein we have stood united is in such terms, as is not agreeable to sundry persons*, who are of sober conversation and religiously disposed; *we do therefore agree to renew* AND EXPRESS OUR CHURCH COVENANT *in the words, or terms hereafter mentioned.*' Our present Covenant follows.

Who could imagine, that a man of intelligence and candor, would comment upon this document as Mr. S. has done? How perfectly evident, that the Church at that time, not all feeling satisfied with their *previously* existing Covenant, *here adopted a new one* — not one which was to last *for a moment only*, but one

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the Church in 1825, also says, that he has heard Mr. Thomas say, he could readily *sign*, not only this old Covenant, but all 'the thirty-nine articles' of the Church of England, though he might wish to make some *mental reservation!* Another male member still, confirms the above, as agreeable to views often expressed by Mr. Thomas, previous to the vote renewing the old Covenant. Mr. Thomas was also settled *as a Trinitarian* over this Church. From the above it clearly appears, that 'the Church *generally*,' if not *universally*, did then approve of this Covenant, and the Pastor gave it his official 'sanction.' But before other Church meetings were called, opposers to the old Covenant *without* the Church, if not the *one* within, so influenced Mr. Thomas, as to lead him to the course he afterwards pursued. Other more intimate friends would naturally follow. If this view be substantially true, and there is great probability if not certainty of the fact, then the Church vote, renewing the old Covenant, was *legitimate*, and received the official 'Sanction' of the Pastor at the time. Of course, no *subsequent* veto could be valid.

which was '*to continue*,' as the Covenant by which others were to be received to this Church in 'future generations,' *unless* they 'found like occasion' to alter it How perfectly futile the argument, that because the *names* of the then present members only were 'underwritten,' that others did not give *their consent* to it, when admitted. It is not common for Church members to *sign their names to the Covenant*, except on its 'special' renewal. It is enough that their admission be recorded on the Records. (Did Mr. Thomas sign *his* Covenant, and are all the other names here 'underwritten'?) I would inquire how much those 'tender consciences,' of which Mr. S. speaks, would have been *relieved*, were the *new Covenant* then adopted, to go into *immediate disuse*, and the *old* one be restored? Or, take the other horn of the dilemma, that the *old one* was *not* restored, and this Church must have been *without a Covenant*, 'during the whole period of one hundred and fifteen years!' or at least, till Rev. Mr. Thomas *recorded* his, for it is in his own 'handwriting,' though at what *date* and by whose *vote*, we are not informed. '*Church Book, Vol. II. p.* 177,' we are excluded from examining! * We have requested and still request, to know from those who have *access* to these Records, the *date* when the Church 'found like occasion,' and voted to *lay aside this Covenant of* 1710–11, (for it was not 'of itself null and void' till such vote was passed,) and to adopt this *new* one, as it is regarded, or any mere *mental* Covenant. Why has not the Rev. Mr. Sewall given us the 'preamble' to this also, that we may know *by whom* it originated, and on *what authority* it was introduced? If Mr. Thomas did this on his own authority only, (as appears,) although *not a member* of the

* We ask what candor, 'liberality,' or even honesty, there can be in refusing us the privilege of consulting the ancient Records of this Church, and also of the Parish, and then insulting us with this reference to volume and page? Rev. Mr. Sewall refused my special request for simply a *few dates*, relative to the admission of our own Church members, although I told him he might hold the book in his own hand, if he feared to have me take it Deacon Bailey, the Parish Clerk, also refused the privilege of copying *a single word* from the Parish Records. What means such conduct in an enlightened community? Does not *the reference to public Records* prove them to be *lawfully accessible* to the public? What principle then can justify such denial? Have we not well said, 'What *harm* can a knowledge of *facts* do to the *innocent*.' ('Church Manual,' p. 15.) Does not this refusal *look* as though they *feared the light* we might bring forth from those volumes? Does it not betray the *appearance of dishonesty?* We are indeed thankful for the two useful facts, already unwittingly disclosed, relative to the authority of the old Covenant and Mr. Thomas's 'formula.' But we are told, that 'a legal process' 'was feared.' If we got one of those books, they would be obliged 'to sue for it!' (p. 6.) Of course, we are *too dishonest* to be trusted, and *too poor* to give bonds for the Treasure! Said a late member of the old Parish, illustrating this refusal to another, 'If a man wished to borrow *my* book, I should not fear to lend it: but if he wished to borrow *his own*, which I claimed *unjustly*, I should have my fears.'

Church, and then, when *the Church* wished to *revive their own*, to the laying aside of *his*, that he should attempt to 'quash' the whole, was truly 'lording it over God's heritage,' with no ordinary severity! His dismission as Pastor does indeed seem to have been called for. But 'there is no evidence that Rev. Mr. Thomas *ever used*' this old Covenant, which 'he is spoken of as *neglecting*.' As if, forsooth, a man who should *never read* his *Bible*, could not be said to *neglect* it!

The charge of insincerity and dishonesty is heaped upon the eleven and others, who joined the Church 'less than two years before their removal,' because that they, being Calvinists, 'joined a Church *not Calvinistic*,' and 'owned a covenant *not Calvinistic*,' &c. But, as we have seen, their ancient covenant was still in force, which was Calvinistic, and the *New Model*, used by Mr. Thomas for the admission of members,* was also, (so far as it goes,) strictly *in harmony with Calvinism*. Those persons could, therefore, *conscientiously* join that church, and when they were *in it*, it was their undoubted *right*, as well as privilege and *duty*, to seek *its improvement*. They had seen things which they thought were not properly regulated, especially in the admission of members. As I am credibly informed, they had seen numbers admitted to the Church, on the responsibility of the Pastor alone; and even when *written objections* against their admission had been presented to him, those objections were not noticed. Other things were in a 'loose state.' How could *worthy* members be 'satisfied' to see things remain thus, 'to the end,' and not attempt some reformation? and how can worthy members *now complain* of men for exercising their undoubted *rights*, and performing their solemn *duties*? They knew the *original character* of this Church, its present covenant, the character of some of its members, who joined July, '76 — the funds early given for a *Calvinistic ministry*; and on what principle could such men as united with 'the eleven,' be debarred the privilege of joining said Church, — 'the dear Church of their Pilgrim Fathers,' — whom they loved and venerated? Why might they not take hold to 'strengthen the things that remained, and were ready to die'? to revive former *spirituality*, and a belief in *those great truths*, slighted as they now often are, which have probably done more than anything else, with the divine blessing, to make New England what it is? None acquainted with the history of those times, and of this Church in particular, will say it was through the activity and energy of the Churches or their pastors, at that time, that so many 'old parishes' became Unitarian. It was a *sinking down*, by *neglect*, and *inactivity*, and *worldliness*, into a conformity to the *natural state* of unrenewed man, — that state encouraged by a ministry

* It is entitled 'Covenant propounded on admission of members to this Church,' in the handwriting of Rev. Mr. Thomas.

teaching that '*we are greatly deceived by the popular theological division of our race into two classes*,' by which is drawn a line, straight and inflexible, as between two distinct orders of beings having no alliance, and unable to pass from one to the other. *That division is a mere fiction.* That line is nowhere apparent among real characters, which we meet and mingle with on the stage of life. *The world contains no such beings as the saints and sinners described in many sermons, and printed in many tracts and magazines.*' 'There is as much evidence of *partial depravity* in the one case, [i. e. among *the best* of men,] as of a *partial holiness* in the other,' [i. e. among *the worst*.] Unitarian Tract, No. 3. By *Edmund Q. Sewall.*' Or by a ministry which says of the *Atonement*, as believed by Evangelical denominations, 'to us, *this doctrine* seems to carry on its front strong marks of absurdity, and we maintain that *Christianity ought not to be encumbered with it.*' 'A scheme more fitted to obscure *the brightness of Christianity, and the mercy of God, or less suited to give comfort to a guilty and troubled mind, could not, we think, be easily framed!*' Unitarian Tract, No. 108. 'By *Wm. E. Channing, D. D.*' It is not strange that this man's mind was troubled in his last hours.* It was inactivity, and teaching virtually, as we believe such language implies, as above quoted, that man needs no Saviour, 'denying the Lord that bought them,' and, as it were, trampling 'under foot the Son of God,' and counting 'the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing' It was teaching such doctrines as these, and others kindred to them, that *ejected* so many *whole Churches*, and majorities of Churches, from the old parishes where their fathers worshipped, and where they had left funds for the support of their like precious faith. (One whole Conference of *fourteen* Churches, a few years since, reported that they had all been thus exiled. Several of the old houses of worship have since been closed through the year, and others for a part of the year.) When these men, — 'the eleven' and others in Scituate, — saw this *sinking state* of religious things previous to 1825, they felt that there was something left for them to do. They neglected their duty, perhaps, for a time, but they finally entered upon it, and attempted a reform. They intended *by degrees* to raise

* A few weeks before his death Dr. Channing wrote: 'As I grow older, I grieve at the impositions on the human mind.' 'I distrust sectarian influence more and more.' 'I am little of a Unitarian.' And so it would seem, for again he says: 'The doctrine of the Word made Flesh, shows us *God uniting himself most intimately with our nature*, manifesting himself in a human form, for the very end of making us partakers of his own perfection. The doctrine of grace, as it is termed, reveals the infinite Father, imparting his Holy Spirit, the best gift he can impart, to the humblest human being who implores it.' He prays also to Christ thus: 'Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood on the Cross, to reconcile man to man, and earth to Heaven.' Surely this looks like a retraction of the whole system he had done so much to establish.

their standard, to have all *admissions* regulated by the voice of the Church, instead of the pastor alone — to *revive their covenant*, and have all sign it, who were 'disposed' — no hard or unreasonable request. These things, which were 'lawful and just,' they effected in an *orderly* and *regular* manner.

Now, what was there in all this so reprehensible? Yea, was it not rather commendable and praiseworthy? If a lyceum, a temperance society, a state or national government, become *inefficient* and *corrupt*, what is the duty of good men? To let all go to ruin together, or to take hold and *reform* abuses, and establish a pure, efficient, and vigorous body? Duty is evident, if the body be worth preserving. Why may we not act thus in regard to a Church, and especially when that Church is seen rapidly falling from the hands of those to whom it legitimately belongs? Can it be that *such* rights are denied, or called in question, by those who profess to adopt 'liberality' and 'righteousness' among their 'central principles'? But, says Mr. Sewall, 'let a band of Unitarians enter a Calvinistic Church in the same way, and proceed to attempt a similar change, and what would be thought and said of it?' Did not the Rev. gentleman know, that it was precisely in such a way they *had* taken possession, not only of this, but nearly all the Churches they can boast of in the State, only they have often been, as here, but a mere *fragment* of the original, set up by the authority of a Judge! By concealing their sentiments, and taking into their own hands the right of admissions, this very thing has been done, again and again, as numerous documents, lying by my side, abundantly show. The fourteen Churches of one entire Conference were all thus exiled. But because done thus craftily and by degrees, does it improve the matter? It would seem, *their own conduct* now looks horrid, if they can make it appear but partially reflected in another! It would be easy to extend remarks upon this part of the subject, refuting 'the Catholic' illustration, and other points, but it is unnecessary.

I proceed to add a few observations, by way of corrections, &c. on the subject of *the funds*. Esquire Turner says, that 'the First Church, as such, *never exercised* or had any *control, management*, or *direction* whatever of the funds.' I replied, 'then the Rev. Mr. Deane has made another false statement, or my correspondent has made one;' and quoted the following among other passages from Mr. Deane. 'In 1654, Mr. Hatherly, the untiring patron of the plantation, offered to make a deed of gift to Mr. Chauncy, ["*as he is the Church's*," says the recorded deed.] of a house and land on 'Satuit' Brook, on condition that Mr. Chauncy agreed to spend his life in Scituate, which offer he declined. Mr. Hatherly then makes the deed *to the Church, and submits the farm to their disposal.* The same year, *the Church conveys it* to

Mr. Chauncy, by deed of gift, signed probably by most of the *male members*, viz., Timothy Hatherly, Thos. Chittenden,' and eighteen others. 'Though this was given without any condition to be performed, on Mr. Chauncy's part, at least specified in the deed, yet on his retiring, at the close of the same year, the farm seems to have been *relinquished to the Church*.' (*Deane's Hist.* p. 175.) Mr. Deane also says, (p. 33,) 'we have seen no writings on record, by which the farm was then relinquished *to the Church*, and *by the Church* to the Society, but such relinquishments, we understand, were made.' * The *time when* the Church made this relinquishment *to the Society*, if *ever* made formally, does not appear. It was not, probably, *before the Society began to exist* as a separate body from *the Church*, some time after 1662. (See note, *Cor.* p. 67.) It appears that the *first* book of the Society's records, as separate from those of the Church, commenced in 1695. Previous to that date *the Church*, of course, had the *whole control* of religious affairs, as *the only organized body* for religious purposes. (See note, *Cor.* p. 67.) Unfortunately, the early *Church* records, till 1707, are lost. But since 1695, the Church and Society have transacted business separately. Now, what can be plainer than the fact, that the Church *did* have, *for a time*, some 'control, management, or direction,' of at least a part of the fund? 'The farm was given to the Church.' But says Deacon Bailey, 'that may be; but did the Church take possession? It is known, as your correspondent states, "that the First Church, as such, never exercised. or had any control, management, or direction whatever, of the funds, as they would have done had they owned them."' (p. 54.) To this the Esquire replies, (across the table, as it would appear,) '*I said* the funds were *always* under the control of the Parish. *You confirm this* (!) and does Mr. Deane say any thing different!!' (p 62.) To such plain *contradictions*, confirmed again and again, I know not what to think, or what to reply. One declares a falsehood, (or charges it upon Mr. Deane, his once intimate friend,) the Deacon affirms it, and the Esquire repeats the asseveration!! That is, one says the thing is true, because *you* say so; and the other replies, yes, it is true, because *you* say so! Argument, indeed! Surely, I need some 'current coin' to meet such things. If they furnish the *ideas*, how can I refrain using the appropriate words, if I speak at all? Those are 'bespattered,' usually, who fall into the ditch, — not those who find them there. There must have been a time when the Church had 'possession,' after 'the farm was submit-

* The recorded deed, dated July 30, 1654, says: 'I, the said Timothy Hatherly, gave all my right and interest in the said houses and lands *unto the Church*, and *bid the brethren do with it what they thought fit*.' They transferred it to Mr. Chauncy, ('as he is the Church's,'?) and, says Mr. Deane, 'the farm was then [again] relinquished to the Church,' &c.

ted 'to their disposal,' 'and while *conveying it* once, if not repeatedly, to others. According to Mr Deane, if *the Parish* ever had any control of this farm, it must have been transmitted to them through the *agency* of the Church. Mr. Hatherly gave it *to the Church, — not* to the Society.

Esquire Turner complains of my quotation from Mr. Deane, (*Cor.* p. 68,) as not being 'fair,' because I quoted only so much as was to my purpose, omitting nothing which would necessarily conflict. The 'purchase of Israel Chauncy' might have been from 'the proceeds' of *other* Church property. But a word further relative to this 'purchase.' We find in the Conihasset records, (p. 168,) the following: 'July 22, 1699. Taken up by Steven Vinal, Sen. *seven acres of land*, in the right of Master Charles Chauncy, in behalf of the Church and Society, at the northwardly end of Scituate, in the fifth division of Cohasset land, and in the twenty-fourth allotment or choice in said division of seven acres to a share at two several places.' (See allusion to this from Mr. Deane, in *Cor.*, close of first note, p. 69.) This was probably *all the purchase*, in which '*the Society* became successor to President Chauncy,' and which could not, of course, include the *two farms*, before given to the Church; for we read just below, (as I before quoted,) that 'in 1701,' a year or two *after* the above purchase, 'they sold *all the lands* which they owned as *successor* to Mr. Chauncy, and built a barn *on the parsonage* with the proceeds.' Hence it appears, that the *parsonage* was not sold, and probably only the seven acres mentioned above; yet it was '*all* the lands,' &c.

I will here say, that the 'scurrilous anecdote,' as it is called, (p. 31,) or its substance, is known by some, if not by Esquire Turner, to have had its foundation in *fact;* but why thus attempt to evade the moral point for which it was introduced? 'We suppose,' &c. The *truth* of the sentiment is the same, 'whether ever spoken or not.'

I will here notice another instance of *pure quibbling*, upon my expression, that '*Churches* have remained *bodies corporate*,' (see '*Second Series*,' p. 62.) I had given the language of a *Judge*, saying that 'a Church has been known as a body corporate from the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth, was recognized and confirmed *as such* by the earliest statutes,' &c., and had given the *present* revised statute in which '*the deacons, church wardens*, and other similar officers of all Churches, &c. shall be deemed *bodies corporate*,' &c. Hence he infers, that it is 'not the Churches,' but 'the deacons,' &c. who are 'bodies corporate.' As well might we say that *a state* is not a body corporate for holding property, because the power is vested in the hands of the representatives or particular officers, and does not include all the women and children. No conveyance of lands of any Church shall be effectual to pass the same, if made by the deacons without

the consent of the Church, or of a committee of the Church, appointed for that purpose,' &c. (Revis. Stat. chap. 20, sect. 42.) This shows, that the deacons act only as a kind of *representatives* of the Church. But further, he says that 'the term churches, as here used, [in the Statute,] is evidently used in a sense denoting *sect*,' &c. as 'the Episcopal Church, the Catholic Church, and not the First Church in Scituate.' That is, as I understand him, all the deacons of the Congregational Churches are one body corporate, and all 'the Church wardens' of the Episcopal Churches, another, &c.

But, laying aside such trifling, I have a word to add on the main question, *to whom justly and morally belong* those early funds, given 'to the Church,' and 'for the use of the Ministry' in 'the North Parish in Scituate?' The bare statement of such a question in this community, almost universally calls forth the reply, — to the original and present *Trinitarian Congregational Church.* These funds were given expressly to *that* Church, and for the use of *their* ministry — not a ministry diametrically opposite.* (How can the Gospel and its *opposite* be 'the same Gospel?' p. 54. See Gal. 1 : 6 – 9.) This is most certainly *implied*, though it may not be *all expressed* in the letter. And to make use of this latter *oversight*, ('we cannot say it for them!') to justify, if possible, the everlasting perversion of funds, however it might appear in a *jurist*, I hesitate not to say, it is most unbecoming in a professed *preacher* of 'righteousness.' Hear the decision of the Lords and Judges of England. 'A suit at law was instituted, and finally decided in favor of the Orthodox claimants by a *unanimous sentence of a Special Bench of Lords and Judges*, whose judgment was declared to be based entirely on this one single common sense principle, viz., "that the charities in question [Lady Hewley's] *could not belong to Unitarians, because no such denomination of Christians was known to be in existence, at the time when they were given.*" The same is true of the funds in

* A writer in the New England Puritan, (once a member of the Legislature) after discussing this subject at some length, comes to this conclusion: 'Such, then, was the original design of our *Parish funds.* In the first place, our pious forefathers meant to provide in this way for the sure support of a *stated and permanent ministration of the gospel.* In the next place, they meant to provide for the preaching of *their own religious sentiments.* It is evident they had no intention of making provision for any other gospel than that which they loved, and for the sake of which they had come to this land. I repeat it, they had *no intention* of making any, the least provision for the support of rationalism, libertinism, or any other ism, but *their own* ism.' (*Puritan* for Jan. 3, 1845.) The *restoration of Harvard University*, (my own 'Alma Mater,') now irresistibly in progress, will be but preliminary to the restoration of numerous *perverted Church funds*, and of the present trampled-upon *rights* of many Churches throughout the State. These steps, when taken, will be a serious check, if not fatal blow to the progress of those *self-styled* 'liberal principles,' (alias, principles *subversive of the pastoral office, and even the very Church of Christ*,) that have prevailed to so great an extent for many years past.

Scituate. And yet, says our opponent, 'there is no evidence' that 'the chief donors prescribed the condition.' Had they done so, 'their bequests would no longer be *ours*, than the condition was complied with.' (p. 83.) Noble concession! But I have been verbally informed by one of the writers, that '*the Trinity* was *not in dispute* in those early times.' Nor was the existence of the *Church* itself. Both were alike believed and equally embraced. Hence, funds given to that *Trinitarian* Church, ought not to be perverted to an opposite, or Unitarian body, not then in existence. Those who can justify this Unitarian claim to these Calvinistic funds, because the *civil law* may be in their favor, could justify slaveholding on the same principle. But what says the *moral law*? Whatever *ex post facto* laws have since been made, in England, (of which I was *not ignorant*,) they cannot justify, in *Republican* America, the perversion of such a self evident, 'common sense principle' as this. *Law*, evidently, does not always make right. More than three fourths of the people, (313 out of 415 legal voters, 1844,] in the North Parish in Scituate are now shut out of the house where their fathers worshipped, and for *whose benefit* they left no inconsiderable *funds*,—shut out, not by those who hold to the faith of their fathers, but by those of an opposite faith. The act of incorporation, in 1803, was, 'to authorize the *North* Parish in Scituate,' then including the whole population of the territory, 'to sell certain lands *for the use* of the ministry *in said parish*,' not for a *fourth*, or one *hundredth* part of it, as may yet be the case, if those who now have 'the control' continue to 'exercise' their power as heretofore. But I will not further argue this point. I will only say, that I have the pleasure of the most satisfactory proof, that all the Evangelical Churches in this place, with nearly if not quite every member of the Societies connected with them, besides a large number of persons not connected, are wholly in our favor as to this question. Confidently may I repeat, 'the world know our wrongs, and the wrongs suffered by numerous other Churches similarly situated, and the world condemn the course, though they [or a certain class] still cling to it. They may succeed and prosper for a time, but alas for their end!'

A few corrections and remarks upon the review of *Note B*, will be next in order. The subject and person here principally referred to, are regarded as 'forced into the case without the least possible reference to the matter at issue.' The attentive reader, however, will see a close connection with that part of the argument in the Correspondence, where this note was referred to, (see *Cor.* p. 27.) I was arguing our claim to the title of First Church, from the fact that the *First* Church in Scituate was *Trinitarian* and *Calvinistic*, and, as such, had been continued down, without interruption, to the present time; while, on the other hand, those

now worshipping in the First Parish meeting-house hold to a faith in general 'diametrically opposite.' I quoted Priestley and Belsham, (whose writings are approved by Unitarians,) and referred to numerous other Unitarian writers, both in this country and in Europe, and specified some of the more *fundamental doctrines* of Christian faith, as we understand the gospel. How natural and almost necessary to my argument was it, that I should refer to *the views* of the present religious instructor in the First Parish? I did it not in '*hostility*,' but as a 'friendship,' both to him and this community. To *conceal* one's sentiments, is no part of a faithful minister's duty. I had been frequently informed, that Mr. Sewall did not differ essentially from the Orthodox, and he had expressed nearly the same opinion to me, personally. I have been repeatedly told by his hearers, that they supposed Mr. S. believed in the supreme divinity of Christ, in regeneration, and the atonement, &c., and I had heard him use Orthodox expressions so freely in prayer, that I was half persuaded it was even so; and it was my ardent desire and prayer, that if he were not already confirmed in *the truth*, in all respects, he might soon become so. On one funeral occasion, where he professed deep sympathy, I invited him to make remarks, having received a similar invitation from him. I sometimes even thought, — well, it may yet be, that Mr. S. will truly become Orthodox, and we may here labor together like brethren! But my fond anticipation soon received a serious check. At the school-house, I felt myself assailed. I felt aggrieved and injured. I was not alone. Others, of different denominations, spoke of it at the time and since. The two clergymen, who preceded him in his remarks, bear unequivocal testimony. Two others, one the president of the Association then assembled, have also testified; and all are ready to re-affirm the truth to which they there testify. A most worthy citizen, in the immediate neighborhood of the school-house, expresses the opinion that a score of names, testifying to the same fact, could probably be obtained with ease, were it necessary. Some of Mr. Sewall's own society, as I am informed, have expressed their astonishment at his evident assault on that occasion. But if a man can charge upon so many, the most deliberate falsehood, and that, too, 'with a funeral wreath in his hand,' he could meet a score of written testimonies in a similar manner.

Mr. Sewall says, 'A good life, in its relations to a happy death, was at such a time no inappropriate theme.' (p. 69.) The mode of conflict will be easily seen, when I state more fully the general train of my own remarks, preceding his. I knew nothing of the deceased, except their names. I spoke first of the happy influence of temperance, in general, upon the *morals* of a community, and then dwelt more particularly on this fact, namely, that *mere morality*, in the ordinary sense of that term, is not enough to prepare us for a happy death and holy heaven. I illustrated

this truth by the young man in the gospel, who lacked the 'one thing,' and in other ways. The course of Mr. S.'s remarks can be easily imagined. Sudden conversions, and the like, were especially deprecated. I thought of Paul's conversion, of the Publican, of the penitent thief on the cross, and others, as a sufficient refutation of many things uttered, but I concluded to keep silent, except to close, by request, the services, pronouncing what Mr. Sewall calls a 'Trinitarian doxology,' but which was 2 Cor. 13 : 14, *verbatim!* The 'prayer' was, probably, 'Trinitarian,' in a similar sense. What consequence if the *word* 'Trinity,' &c., be not found in the Scriptures, when our opponents acknowledge expressly *the thing!*

But 'Mr. Wight catechises Mr. Sewall! Mr. Wight catechising Mr. Sewall!' (p. 58.) Surely, it is a most unheard of impropriety, for a *young* man to make inquiries of an *elder!* especially if a minister! But, to whom should the young go for knowledge if not to the wise and learned? But I must further reply, that Mr. S. *began* the 'catechising,' by asking the first question, — a question I could not properly answer, till I had proposed several to him. (See inquiries, *Cor.* p. 53.) His replies furnished me with a most rational answer; and the remembrance of his replies also furnished me with additional *force* to my argument, in deciding who were the First Church. I wished to bring to the test not merely 'what *two* writers may have uttered, or two preachers spoken in a foreign or our native land,' although like Priestley and Belsham, 'the most conspicuous' Unitarians, probably, in all modern Europe, but what the whole *associated body* receive, as avowed in their *authorized publications*, and especially what was held by the *present minister* of the First Parish in Scituate. And besides, he has acknowledged to me, the substance of the quotations from Priestley and Belsham, — *We are idolators*, in his opinion, and *all our tracts are opposed to Unitarianism*, although approved and circulated by 'thirteen religious denominations' in the United States.* These assertions have been made to me by Rev. Mr. S., though I might not be able to prove it to his satisfaction, even could I prove it, 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses.' *His* tracts, however, *are* sectarian, being *exclusively Unitarian.* Mine are *not* so, as seen above, and in sending them 'throughout his parish, for many a month past,' we have only imitated the pious and active in Boston, New York city, and elsewhere.

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* The second article in the Constitution of the American Tract Society, at Boston, is as follows : — 'The object of this Society is to promote the interests of vital godliness and good morals, by the distribution of such Tracts, as shall be calculated to *receive the approbation of serious Christians of all denominations.*' The society in New York, (being united with the one in Boston,] say 'Religious Tracts calculated to receive *the approbation of all evangelical Christians.*' See Boston *Report* for 1845, also American Mess., for June, 1845.

The children's talk about the Sabbath school celebration, proves no 'indiscretion in the *mode* of announcing the plan,' as the invitation was general to all, though publicly announced only in the three evangelical places of worship.

But a word, more particularly, in regard to district No. 5. Mr. Sewall speaks of *his* 'parishioners in that quarter of the town,' and of 'the long illness of a parishioner in that part of the parish,' &c. It has been ascertained that he had but *one man* who belonged to *his parish*, in all this district; and this man was not the one *ill*, as that very man *withdrew* from the old Parish, and joined ours in 1831, where he remained till his death.* His widow has since united with our church. It is not questioned but that other families or individuals in this district, beside *the one*, occasionally attended meeting with the First Parish; but the truth ought to appear, that the Rev. Mr. Sewall had *not a single child* belonging to any of his 'parishioners' in all this district, and but *one man!*

Mr. Sewall *sought* a union and introduction to our meetings, *not* by consulting those who originated and sustained them, but through the guileless simplicity of the district. He well knew that evangelical ministers of all denominations had excluded him from their Christian fellowship and pulpits, and that, in consistency and conscience, we must do the same in this religious meeting and Sabbath school. He knew *his* position and *ours*, in this respect, though most, if not all, the district knew it not. Our recent Sabbath school celebration had also just refreshed his memory. Captain Damon, with myself, and the community in general, could assent to his 'coming to lecture in this neighborhood,' — none wished to abridge this privilege, unless he should interfere with the *place* and *hour* of our previous engagements. Capt. D., the Baptists, and others, were of the same opinion with myself as to this union, as soon as they heard the developments of *doctrine*, before certified.

But Mr. Sewall says he did not 'first seek the clergymen who were to preach there,' because he was 'on the spot at the time,' and 'a long way from home,' &c., although he could not *return* home without passing almost directly by the residence of two of them, and had all the week from Monday till the Sabbath to visit them. But again, he 'only designed a meeting for devotion and experimental religion, not to disseminate any peculiar doctrines. Repentance and spiritual life were to have been my topics, not points of disputation.' (p. 70.) I regret to disturb such pious remarks, but almost shudder to see them thus stand in this connection. On the first introduction of the subject at his study, he

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* 'All persons belonging to any religious society, shall be taken and held to be members, until they shall file with the clerk of such society a written notice, declaring the dissolution of their membership.' — *Revised Statutes, Chap.* 20, *sect.* 4.

observed, with *too much emotion* to have his remarks soon effaced from my memory, that 'he could not allow us [the Orthodox and Baptists,] *to disseminate our principles*, and *not allow him an equal chance to defend his*,' &c. (See *Cor.* p. 53.) But here he contradicts his former purpose; it was '*not* points of disputation' he intended to introduce, but,' &c. Such smoothing down may make these letters appear very fair and devotional, but I love *truth* as well as 'devotion,' and especially *in* my devotion. My own consciousness will not allow me to believe, that my 'statements,' so far as they go, leave a wrong impression of his 'words,'—I cannot say as to his 'meaning in using them.' I should have been glad, if he had explained more fully, in what respects he regards himself misrepresented. He is here extremely cautious. If he refers to doctrinal sentiments, that he does not reject all the doctrines I mention; I am aware that he does not *in name*; but will he say that he receives all, or even *one* of them, *substantially* in the sense generally received by evangelical denominations? Keeping up *old names*, after *the things* represented by those names have been discarded, is no uncommon deception. But in what other respects have I left 'a wrong impression?' Can it be in reference to the *persuasion* of Capt. D.? This looks to me like a small point for disputation, but as to its *truth*, Capt. Damon has himself testified, and still testifies. But I am told, 'it was persuasion on the other side, which afterwards produced a change of feeling in him, if he be changed.' (p. 71.) Yes, truly, 'persuasion,' and *confirmation*, also, from the *doctrinal sentiments advanced by Rev. Mr. Sewall himself*, and not from one word advanced by me, as Capt. D. has since informed me.

One point further, as to the final withdrawal of Mr. Sewall from the school-house. The *cause* of this withdrawal is stated to be, that 'if he kept his appointment,' &c., we 'should hold a meeting in a neighboring house at the same hour.' (p. 71.) This gives an incorrect view of the subject. We should have been ready to have yielded to *that one* appointment without a word, if that had been the proposal; but our decision was with reference solely to his purpose, and determination, at all events, apparently, if possible, to *have a permanent union* with us in this plan. We expressly told him 'he might have the school-house every day and evening in the week, except the two hours, we had selected.' But he must 'take *his turn* in preaching,'—it was to *this*, and this *only*, that we objected, and told him, if he persisted, we must conscientiously withdraw to some neighboring house, if it could be found.

And now, let me inquire, what *new aspect* has the Rev. Mr. Sewall put upon this whole affair, taken in connection with the corrections here made? The 'interference' is most evident, even from Mr. Sewall's own account,—he *acknowledges* nearly every clause,—every *essential* statement, I had before written on

that subject. After all the attempts to evade it, it still appears as clear, and even clearer, to many, than ever before. But thus *truth always brightens* the more you investigate it.

All those persons who signed Note B., had more or less knowledge personally of the facts therein stated, and *together* could testify to nearly, if not quite, every clause it contains; some referring, more particularly, to one part, and others to other parts. They testify to what they individually *know*, as the persons of *all others* (except Mr. S. and myself) *the best acquainted* with the *facts*. And, after all the efforts to induce them to retract, they all stand firm.

I will now ask the reader candidly to review this whole subject, and point to any position I have taken, which has been blameworthy, granting this one privilege, that *I cannot conscientiously fellowship those whom I believe are virtually rejecting the gospel of Christ to the ruin of souls.* (See Gal. 1 : 6 — 10. 2 Pet. 2 : 1. 2 John 9 — 11.) Examine the whole subject carefully, view every point, and, with the above admission, where have I erred? Point me to the spot, and show me one clear and sound reason for it, and I will acknowledge it to the world. But it is easy for those who have descended to the lowest or to very low views of doctrine, and embrace *the whole family of man as holy*, and *believe in no eternal world of sorrow*, it is easy for such to profess *great fellowship* with 'love and charity' for all above them, holding to scriptural views of Christian fellowship.

A few *miscellaneous* corrections will prepare the way for a close. Those who read the communication addressed to Rev. Mr. Thomas, April 6, 1825, and 'signed by a *majority* of the male members of this Church,' will see sufficient *reason* why one deacon might request the other 'not to make any preparation for the sacrament of the supper' on a certain occasion, and can judge more accurately, which of the two *may* have been the *more* 'worthy man.' (See '*Second Series*,' p. 52.)

'The annual meeting of the First Church and Society was held on Monday, April 18, 1825.' (See page 52.) Was this a *Church* meeting, or a *Society* meeting? Who presided as Moderator? On which book were the Records made? Or was it a meeting of both Church and Society? And is there a *third* class of books for such records? And would Mr. C. have been a *voter* at this meeting, if he had belonged to the *Church*, though not to the Society? When men write thus vaguely, it starts a great many queries. It bewilders rather than instructs.

On p. 57, my old correspondent, besides misstating the *first*, attempts to foist in a *fourth* false statement, as having been made by me against Mr. Deane, which he marks at his option, No. 2. The candid reader, however, will see, that I have made no such charge. I simply suggest an *inquiry* on that point. Of *this*

second charge, however, he says, a few lines below, and says *truly*, 'the second, not even mentioned!' But he is erroneous in saying the same of 'the *third*' charge, as any one may see, if he will allow them to read the second *note* in *Correspondence*, p. 72, in addition to my remarks under 'thirdly,' p. 11, of same edition. But this kind of discussion, I must admit, is not very weighty, especially when we take into the account the story of Massasoit's grandson; the Church never controlling the funds; certain expositions of the law, &c. and compare the whole with the closing paragraph of his own first letter, dated August 21, 1844.

But 'I might have supposed *my years* would have shielded me.' (p. 67.) Or if not, it was hoped at least, that 'the plough and hoe' might have been effectual. To these apologies, I need perhaps only reply, that they seem quite at variance with a principle before laid down by this writer, as a proper standard relative to ministers. He says, '*they* now are only esteemed, and loved, as *their characters* may be estimable and lovely.' (*Correspondence*, p. 16.) Why should not *justices* be esteemed by a similar standard? At least, how can this writer complain of such a standard? I knew little or nothing of his *years*, or his *employments*, except as developed in his writings. (See the close of his third, and introduction to his fifth letter.) I had never seen or known him personally, and hence endeavored to meet him in argument on his own principles, (when they appeared so evidently just,) viz. according to *character*. Of this, my principal, if not only, means of judging, were his own sentiments and language, expressed in his letters to me. Guided by these, I doubt not my language will be regarded as very lenient, rather than severe. But I know, and would ever remember that the Bible teaches, that 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, *if* it be found in the way of righteousness.'

But 'error is always clashing.' This expression of mine is thought repeatedly apropos, by my former correspondent, as well as by myself. He had been slain too many times with his own weapon not to attempt the like manœuvre, where there appeared the least hope of success. Hence he applies the above remark on p. 58, to my very simple statement of *facts*, that the school-house 'had been *open* for years,' and also '*closed* for years,' since Mr. Sewall's settlement here. Twelve or fourteen years are quite enough to make all this very easy and simple! On p. 55, he attempts to make out another 'clashing,' because I say in the long letter, 'were you the only person for whom I *may be* writing,' &c.; he hence infers, that I *then* had certainly '*intended* to publish.' But I say no such thing. It was wholly *conditional*. '*If* you and I cannot decide,' &c. I did indeed regard it *possible*, after receiving a stream of three such letters in rapid succession from him, that what I was writ-

ing *might* be published, but *I had not* at that time any such *purpose*. This, however, must *be proved*, before he can make out any 'clashing.' But one more attempt, p. 61. Because I say, that '*I* revere the laws and authority of Old Massachusetts,' &c. and yet, in one of the *omitted notes*, (*Correspondence*, p. 26,) I quote *another writer* as saying, these 'decisions have not been generally acquiesced in, and *will not be*,' &c. he infers the 'clashing.' But I do not say, that *I* shall not acquiesce and submit. Hence there is no clashing. In closing his letter to Dea. B. (p. 65,) he attempts another similar manœuvre, closing with the *threat* of 'ridicule,' the last argument usually, in a *lost* case!

If my opponent had been fair and honest in his publication, he would not have attempted to *suppress* my *notes*, and especially those in reply to his *last letter*, which had in fact become *a part* of the correspondence;* and then to make the matter worse, to introduce only some half dozen snatches from the whole sixty or seventy, where he thought he could give a blow, by giving it *in the dark*. Let the *whole* note about quibbling be seen, and I fear not the candid decision. But it is not surprising, that he should wish to remove *some* of those *notes*, (especially those on pp. 25, 26, 44, 45, 62, 75, &c.) as far from his own letters and book as possible. Nor is it surprising that his last letter especially, should *appear* as if involved in 'fog or mist,' if nothing darker. Error never looks worse than when laid side by side with truth. That this letter was printed in smaller type than the notes, is not just cause of complaint, as it is perfectly free and plain to be read by itself, if desired. That 'this is the *only* book that ever met his eye, with the text in smaller type than the notes,' only proves that he has not yet seen all the world. The practice is frequent, if not common, among reviewers. And that he, or any one else, should complain of its being 'encumbered and overloaded,' as if the *notes* obscured 'the substance,' is indeed strange; as several have said to me, that, the whole is here much easier understood, by having both sides discussed on the same page.

But 'Mr. Wight never asked *my consent* to publish the correspondence between us, or in any way consulted me about its publication;' (p. 54) and thus it is inferred, that he 'violates what even raging politicians hold sacred, and uses my name with his to make discord and division.' (p. 67.) Those who have perused the letters will see, that I repeatedly referred to

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* And I may add, to leave out an *ornamental* argument, from one of his *own* letters, without giving his reasons. (See omission in *Second Series*, p. 14, from *Correspondence*, p. 17.) Perhaps, however, he had reason to fear the name of 'Fairchild,' might suggest what *now* appears more 'formal,' nearer home.

this subject, and urged the promise in his first letter, but he carefully avoided *any reply* on this point. The 'virtual acknowledgment' was indeed a *real* one. The question was on the majority for the renewal of the old covenant. Allowing all his own claim to numbers, as founded on another question, (the dismission of Mr. Thomas) which he brought to the *covenant* vote, and he made them stand twelve to twelve. When I presented two certificates on that very point, he replies, 'to *one* of them you are welcome.' Hence, according to his own unreserved acknowledgment, the numbers would then stand thirteen to eleven, a fair majority in our favor. Now I ask, did he not 'virtually, and *really* acknowledge 'Mr. Deane's statement false'?

Thus the whole question of publication stood. Several had seen the correspondence, and many others had heard of it, and wished to see it. To leave the whole matter here, both sides would probably have claimed the victory, and but few would have known with what propriety. Its publication was called for, not to make fresh 'discord and division,' but to *settle*, if possible, a question long in dispute. Mr. Sewall had told me soon after my settlement here, that *both* churches claimed to be *first*, and every Ecclesiastical Council which met here, (and they have not been unfrequent of late years,) published *our claim* to the irritation of many of *his* people. He wished it might be *settled*, and so did I.* For if we were not the original First Church, whose covenant is now more than one hundred and thirty years old, we were no regular organized church at all. Hence it was of no small importance with us to know more certainly our *true church standing*. With us the question has been an important one — important as our very *church existence*. The correspondence had evolved most of the facts of importance on both sides. It seemed incidentally called up, and was now committed to writing. Why should it not be published, that at least one fair trial might be made for the settlement of this question? We apprehended, after all this *reserve* on the subject of publication, that *if permission to publish were sought directly*, it would be *denied*, as now appears evident. 'I should most certainly have refused.' (p. 57.) I consulted with several men of years, intelligence, distinction, and piety, and under all the circumstances, they sanctioned the proposal. Others, since the publication, have thought my course justifiable and proper. It is very different from publishing *pri-*

* Mr Sewall once inquired of me, in his own study, while conversing on this *disputed* point, before we published the Church Manual, Why can you not take the name 'The First Trinitarian Congregational Church in Scituate?' I replied, Very well, we can. But this was in fact, as all must see, *the real implied name held ever since* 1634. It was this suggestion which led us to insert this name *in full*, in our Church Manual But all this does not harmonize very well with the expression, 'wide from any knowledge I have had for thirteen years,' &c. (See *Second Series*, p. 73.)

vate letters under *ordinary* circumstances. It was discussing a question of *public* interest, and also in fact, reviewing a work already published, in which many in the community felt an interest. The correspondence itself was also in a form already *public*, and the press only put it into a state more convenient for reference. Under these circumstances, and with such advice and approval, I feel not very deeply implicated; and especially since he has done *the same*, without asking *my* permission. But if I have done wrong, in this respect, I regret the impropriety, and also the occasion which led to it.

But the arguments are now before the community. Some of the leading thoughts are the following: It is an indisputable fact, that the *first* Church in Scituate was *originally Calvinistic — a Trinitarian Congregational* Church — and that it remained such without dispute, till 1780 or 1787. (See note D, *Cor.* p. 57.) Their covenant was then 70 or 75 years old, the same we now use, and we have no record that it was ever set aside by the vote and authority of the *Church*, either before or since this date. And further, in 1824–5, we hear this same Church speaking of their covenant, as now 'more than a century' old, and by their own solemn act, they wish to *renew* it. They did so, Feb. 6, 1825, when it appears there were twenty-three male members in the Church, of whom it is certain, admitting their own testimony, that *fifteen* were *Trinitarians*. The Pastor was not a member of the Church, and, of course, had *no right* to a vote, and especially against his own dismission. Under these circumstances, had he a right to 'quash' the vote of his Church? Could he properly do it? We have no record of the *veto* act. And besides, in consequence of his persevering contumacy, and, it would seem, utter contempt of this large portion of his Church, after having made almost every possible effort to gain some notice from him, but in vain, the Church *unanimously voted* his dismissal as Pastor, and thus severed the *ecclesiastical* bond, agreeable to advice of Council. *Twelve* of the twenty-three immediately withdraw from his ministry, and *two* others soon follow their example. A *third* has also *certified* his approval of this act. I may appear to speak confidently, but we have all these facts, not merely from one 'who was, three years since, a stranger in the place,' but from the 'Church Records' made at the time, and from the *living testimony* of male members of the Church, who took an *active part* in those votes—the persons 'best acquainted with all the facts in the case.' And what have we to oppose? Not Church records, or living witnesses, who were *then* active church-members, but *new* comers, and *new* church-members, and a *Universalist* justice, a man never connected with any church whatever, although contending thus valiantly for *Unitarianism*.* I appeal to the com-

*At the time of Mr. Thomas's dismission in 1825, Esquire Turner was a

munity, I appeal to the candid every where, and to posterity, to decide where lies *the truth.* Was there not a majority of the Church at that time in favor of their ancient Trinitarian covenant? Was not Rev. Mr. Thomas properly and ecclesiastically dismissed! And were not those who dismissed him and withdrew, the true *First* Church? Then are the *three* first positions I have assumed, proved to be true.

As to the *fourth* position, relative to the funds, we know that they were *early given;* that Mr. Hatherly gave his two farms, (houses and lands,) one 'to the Church,' and the other 'for the use of the ministry.' For *what kind* of a ministry is evident. The remainder of the funds, perhaps, were raised principally by the town or parish. But *justice* demands, that what was given exclusively to *the Church*, or designed to be under *their* direction, and for *their benefit*, with those who should worship with them, as well as *their own records*, church furniture, &c., should remain in *their possession:* and what was raised by 'the *North* Parish,' and designed for *all*, residing on said territory, should be either divided among all the religious societies, now established in said 'North Parish,' or else, that all who now reside in this Parish should be freely permitted the privilege of joining it, so as to enjoy, if they choose, what was given for *their benefit*, agreeable to the original design. But if things pass on, as they have been going on for a few years past, the whole fund, meeting house, records, and all, designed for the use and benefit of *all* the North Parish, may yet fall into the possession of half a dozen families, or even a single one! And all this is *no sectarianism*, but 'liberal' christianity, with 'righteousness,' as 'the central principle!'

There are numerous other points in the pamphlet under review, that could be easily met, were it necessary. Perhaps, however, I have already been too minute. I have not descended, however, and could not 'bring myself, for my self-respect, to answer' the numerous charges of 'rancor,' 'bitter invectives,' 'sneers,' 'calumnies,' 'scurrility,' allusions to my 'pedler,' and the like, with which certain parts abound. I have aimed rather at the more important points. And here I would again appeal to the candid reader, and ask him to review the whole discussion, and then say — admiting the plain ecclesiastical rights and privileges, guaranteed to the Churches, by the Constitution and Laws of Massachusetts, whether or not, I have fairly sustained the four main positions we have assumed? Where indeed has there been an *essential* point overthrown? I appeal to the decision of the candid.

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member, *not* of 'the First Parish,' but of 'the Universalist Society,' in West Scituate, some eight or ten miles distant; and I have the testimony of his Universalist 'brethren,' that he is fully Universalist still.

I will say in *conclusion*, that I regret as much as any one can, the existence of the present controversy, in itself considered. I know it engenders a bitter spirit in many minds — it alienates neighbors, and fellow-citizens, and mars the peace and good will of society. I have certainly no desire nor love for such things. It is *not* my disposition nor one of 'my delightful duties.' I acted on this principle, in keeping silent at the Union School-house, and in continuing silent with Mr. Sewall, on that subject afterwards, as well as in not inviting him to take part in the Sunday School Celebration. I wished to avoid controversy, as far as possible, with a good conscience, and the causes leading to it. But in the 'Beech-woods' interference, there was no escape. Conscience and principle must be trampled under foot, or we must desert the field, or maintain our rights. We chose the latter. So in regard to the present Church (not parish) controversy. The Manual was called for in our Church. We were suffering for the want of it. Some historical sketch, or at least, the names of the pastors, with dates of ordination, dismission, &c., are almost universally prefixed. To do this, required some explanation, especially in regard to Mr. Thomas. Our old church members, who were best acquainted with the facts, were fast dying off, and would all soon be gone. Their testimony was needed. Posterity claimed it. It has been secured. Our positions have been assailed. Indisposed as I was for controversy, I felt that duty and justice demanded a defence I could not flee from these and be *true* to my church, and people, or to my God. A spirit of inquiry has been thus awakened, which I doubt not will do *good*. The notes were appended, to make what appeared already, to many, *assurance* of truth and right, *doubly* sure. The community in general, (aside from the Unitarian connection,) I am persuaded, by the free expression of opinion, from many of different denominations from my own, are fully with us, in regard to the main points in question. I am not *alone* in this matter. The pamphlet under review, seemed to demand further notice. The whole truth was not evolved, and several points of importance were obscured: not indeed by notes, but by avoiding the first principles of ecclesiastical law and usage, and by decoying the reader with numerous misrepresentations, and a profuse use of abusive epithets, heaped upon my youthful head. In this matter, I wish not to stand upon the *adulations of friends*, nor the slander or threats of enemies, but upon *the immutable principles of truth and right*. Tried by these principles, I fear not this issue, for I am assured that *our cause is just*. It is not surprising that my opponents, distinguished, learned, and talented, as some of them are, should have sadly failed to maintain their positions; for they are most evidently *false*. They are not to blame for the failure, but for advocating a cause so unjust; for such positions can never be supported

by *sound* argument. There can be no *good* excuse, not one sound argument, for refusing to love God. As some ancient worthy has somewhere said, 'It is fated for *error* always to run *crooked*,' so that when 'judgment is laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet,' the error is at once *detected*. All the combined wisdom of the world cannot produce one *sound argument* in support of *error*, or furnish one *valid excuse*, for not at once *renouncing* it, when disclosed.

It is the earnest desire and prayer of the writer, not only that he may *see truth* with increasing clearness, and *love* it with ever-increasing ardor himself, but that his opponents may do likewise. He would not cherish one malicious thought or feeling towards them, or those with whom they are associated, but contrariwise, kindness, good will, and an earnest desire for their highest temporal and spiritual welfare. But sincere and earnest as he is for these things, he can never expect they will enjoy the full fruition of that blessedness, *purchased by a Saviour's blood*, while counting it as 'an unholy thing,' and trampling *his Divinity* in the dust. But I here turn aside from this discussion, 'although I am far from having exhausted my subject.' I have spoken as unto wise men; judge ye what I have said; 'and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.' For 'what doth the Lord require of thee, but *to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*'

SCITUATE, Aug. 1845.

The following notices of the Correspondence, as published in the first edition, have appeared in the Boston Recorder, and Christian Reflector.

'*An Ecclesiastical Controversy.* — Such is the title page of a pamphlet, containing the correspondence between the Hon John B. Turner, member of the First Parish, and Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr., Pastor of the First Church in Scituate, Mass.

'We have read it with lively interest — not merely because it vindicates triumphantly the course of a feeble Church, with whose struggles and difficulties we happen to have had some personal acquaintance, but because it affirms and successfully maintains principles of vital importance to the well-being of a whole family of Congregational Churches — those we mean that are *truly* Congregational, and not *pseudo* Congregational, like the Unitarian and Universalist Churches, that have sprung up within the last fifty years. It is not our province to *review* this controversy between Mr. Turner and Mr. Wight — nor have we leisure to do more than commend it to the attention of all who wish to be informed of the measures systematically, and we believe most unjustly, adopted by Unitarians, for thirty years past, to strengthen themselves, if not in their *faith*, yet in their possession of the records, the funds, and the church furniture belonging by right to those whom truth had made their adversaries. The iniquity that has been widely practised will sooner or later be all revealed. The frauds that have been perpetuated under the sanction of misinterpreted law, and forced construction of Constitution and Statute, will be exposed one after another, till Unitarianism itself will blush at the misdoings of its disciples. Mr. Wight has made a beginning in this necessary work, and it is earnestly to be hoped, that his example will be followed by other pastors, on whom God has devolved the charge of Churches, which have been "*scattered*," from their sanctuaries, "and pealed" of their funds, and held up to reproach for their unsubmissiveness to civil and ecclesiastical usurpations. The sufferings and sacrifices of the First Church in Scituate, have been great, though not greater than those of some sixty or eighty others of their sister churches in Mass. They have borne them patiently; they have labored, and not fainted; and the God they have honored will never leave nor forsake them. "Prayer, pains, and perseverance" will give them deliverance from all their troubles.'—*Boston Recorder.*

'We have received a pamphlet which we think must possess much local interest, and some with the public at large. It is a Controversial Correspondence between the Hon. John B. Turner, of Scituate, and Rev. Daniel Wight, Jr., Pastor of the Congregational Church in that town. The principles and policy of Unitarianism are brought to light in a striking manner; and the struggles of a feeble orthordox church against the overbearing and unjust usurpations of secular power, entrenched behind "ecclesiastical" claims, must elicit the sympathy of all true christians.'—*Christian Reflector*, (*Baptist.*)

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